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# **“Scientist Sade” and Discovery in the High Enlightenment**

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## Abstract

Sade has had many titles over the centuries. He was ‘Marquis’, a *noblesse d’épée*, sitting in his château atop Lacoste; ‘Wolf-man’, on the run from the authorities, a *cause célèbre* for his notorious sexual adventures; ‘Citizen’, a turncoat royalist, a functionary within the bureaucracy of the new French Assembly, eulogizer of the revolutionary heroes, Marat and Le Pelletier; and ‘Divine’, a patron saint of Romantic poets like Flaubert and Baudelaire, and later, the same for the Surrealists. Sade has yet to be given the name: ‘Scientist’. In my dissertation I lay out the ground work for defending this choice of designation by situating Sade and a sampling of his works within a defining period in the history of the object of scientific inquiry: from the eve of the 1789 French Revolution until its dénouement following the death of Robespierre. The three works of focus are *Les 120 Journées* (1785), *Aline et Valcour, ou le Roman philosophique* (1795) and *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir* (1795); and each one is strategically selected to bring to light singular events, marking important changes in humankind’s relationship with the natural world.

This intense focus on Sade magnifies many times over the position Foucault had already assigned him in *Les Mots et les choses* (1966) when, in offering his own version of the evolution of the object of scientific inquiry from the Classical to the Modern Age, he isolates Sade as a heuristic bridge linking the two eras of his focus, using Sade’s erotic novels *Justine* (1791) and *Juliette* (1797) to support his argument. However overly pithy Foucault’s application of Sade may have been, it is felt that he lays a sufficient groundwork, one that I take up in my dissertation and push to even further depths. More than simply conforming to Foucault’s employment of Sade as the “midwife” to Modern science, I do two things of notable difference:

1) I take up the challenge Foucault set in the “Foreword to the English Edition” of *Les Mots et les choses* when he professes “embarrassment” over not being able to account for how “[...] instruments, techniques, institutions...” (p. xiii) of empirical sciences came to match in complexity those individuals and societies that would come to use them. On the one side, Foucault expresses a clear limitation; on the other, he offers up what he believes is half of what it takes to get at this limitation:

“I left the problem of cause to one side. I chose instead to confine myself to describing the transformation themselves, thinking that this would be an indispensable step if, one day, a theory of scientific change and epistemological causality was to be constructed” (p. xiv).

This dissertation offers up a heuristic framework to account for the relationship between both these sides Foucault can only adumbrate: the side of an emergent scientific knowledge and the ontological status of the producers of this knowledge.

2) I position Sade as a representative of an older scientific tradition, one overshadowed in Foucault’s emphasis on Sade and Modern science. Since Iwan Bloch compared *Les 120 Journées* to *Psychopathia Sexualis*, Richard von Krafft-Ebing’s 1886 manual of sexology, dedicated to documenting qualitatively all possible sexual deviancies in human behavior, most readings of Sade in the History of Science have taken him to be on the modern most end of the timeline of the History of Science (Foucault, 1966; Harari and Pellegrin, 1973; Morris, 1990; Vila, 1998; Polat, 2000; Quinlan, 2006; Quinlan, 2013). Some writers in recent years, however, have had the acuity to highlight older scientific influences on Sade’s oeuvre. Armelle St-Martin is one such example, who has written extensively on the influence of Italian science on Sade. Such a focus is a departure from a trend that sees English empiricism defining the scientific mindset in France that, it is believed, would have

influenced Sade's ideas. This would have included the "spirit of exactitude and method" (p. 91) D'Alembert (1751) speaks of in his panegyrics of Bacon, Locke and Newton in *Discours préliminaire de l'Encyclopédie de Diderot* or Voltaire's popularization (1763) of all things English in *Dictionnaire philosophique*. The legacies of both these perspectives have weighed heavily on Caroline Warman's reading of Sade, who sees him (2002) through a more "positive" prism of "sensationalist materialism" in *Sade: from materialism to pornography*. St-Martin sees Sade's scientific orientation directed rather towards much older and ulterior forms of scientific "objects", ones much less "positive". Casamaggi and St-Martin see pneumatological themes like miasmas and corruptions in *Histoire de Juliette*, arriving from Sade's own explorations in such places as amongst the swamps and famously licentious denizen of Venice, the namesake for that special contagion: "maladies vénériennes".

Both these departures from Foucault's conceptualization imply the need to articulate what I call a "negative" trajectory within the History of Science. This term plays an important part in how I engage with Sade and his contemporaries and its explication constitutes a significant aim throughout the course of my dissertation. Sade's own inquiry into the object of scientific inquiry came at a time of great upheaval and he relied on one approach hitherto capable of articulating such "negativity": metaphysics. The very notion of metaphysics was anathema for many, such as D'Alembert who even labeled it a despicable science in the relevant entry in *L'encyclopédie de Diderot*. This dissertation will situate Sade within this battle over the future of science in what was that all crucial period of history when the die was cast in favor of Modern science and its penchant for "positivity"; the period of the French Revolution.

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## Introduction

### 0.1 “Scientist Sade”: A Theoretical Framework

The least surprising thing to come out of efforts over the past two decades to make of the literature of the Marquis de Sade something of significance in the History of Science is the one thing that would be most shocking for those stumbling upon the topic from outside the field. An honorific to this shock could read as follows: Sade: scientist emeritus of Natural Philosophy/ Laboratory: Liberty Tower, the Bastille/ Specialization: Onanism. But the assertion that *littérature pornographique* deserves today a scientific designation is wholly unsurprising in the History of Science. In *The Enlightenment*, Roy Porter speaks of the flexibility of Enlightenment science in such matters even suggesting that those prejudicial against discussing science without numbers, tables and measurements should take it up with the Philosophes themselves:

[They] criticized all such simple-minded extremes [of rationality and irrationality], because they were above all critics, aiming to put human intelligence to use as an engine for understanding human nature, for analyzing man as a social being and, the natural environment in which he lived.<sup>1</sup>

What is most surprising concerning recent scholarship on “Scientist Sade”, however, is a far more technical matter. What the many conclusions emerging out of interpretations of Sade’s work have revealed is an unresolved equivocation at the heart of understanding Modern Science especially the history of its *methods* and *practices*. Two authors in recent years have captured this equivocation in offering two very different positions concerning Sade and his role in the History of Science. They are Caroline Warman, in *Sade: from materialism to pornography* (2002); and Armelle St-Martin in her 2007 essay, “Sade’s System of Perversity and Italian Medicine”. Both set Sade against two intellectual traditions that, although mostly accommodating in theory today, were in the eighteen-century sources of great partisan tension over questions concerning what science was and what role it had in society. Warman holds a position widely held as dogma within discourses in Modern science while St-Martin

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<sup>1</sup> Roy Porter, *The Enlightenment* (London: Macmillan Education Ltd, 1990), 3.

does so on one that is largely uninfluential, one considered a theoretical relic of a bygone age. Despite these positions being far too disparate to be considered equally valid in framing Sade, the scientist, they have coexisted rather comfortably within Sade Studies, proving perhaps that the underlying difference rests within something of a theoretical blind spot. Much of what this essay will aim to do is shed light on how this blind spot is relevant for understanding Sade and show how this blind spot is confined only to modern eyes. More to the point, not only would Sade and the philosophers of his generation have been familiar with both positions being suggested here but they would have also taken up a passionate position for one of them - to the outright exclusion of the other. Sade's choice out of these two options will be the subject of this dissertation and soon it will be clear that this choice aligns much closer with how St-Martin places Sade in the History of Science even though it is the form of how Warman places him that is considered more authoritative within scholarship on Sade and science. As a preliminary demonstration of these two positions, vociferously contested in Sade's age - but raising no controversy amongst historians of science today - it is worth summoning two titans of the period: Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond D'Alembert, whose disagreement will set the parameters for how Sade will be considered between Warman and St-Martin's conceptualisations. The disagreement also restates once again the significance of *littérature pornographique* in the History of Science, it being a mode of erudition that Sade deployed to powerful use.

*Le rêve de d'Alembert* is a work of Enlightenment literature that qualifies as not only a major text of science but also one with its own *episodes pornographiques*. One of Denis Diderot's aims in this work was to fictionalize an actual heated debate that had led to a "falling-out" of sorts with a longtime ally, the mathematician, Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, whose relentless pursuit of knowledge matched only Diderot's in degree of intensity. In their collaboration on that signature work of the Enlightenment, *Diderot's Encyclopédie*, both



stared down with great peril the religious and political Censors of their time. But by the time *Le rêve* was written in 1760 Diderot had come to reject d'Alembert's strident faith in "fact"-driven empiricism. In the plot of the novel, Diderot rendered his former ally, coherent only as a dreamer of dreams, designating his new ally, Théophile de Bordeu - the author of the vitalist work, *Recherches sur les glandes* - d'Alembert's reliable interpreter. Diderot's literary choices here reflect a shift towards Bordeu's views on life sciences, one of whose underlying principles Anne C. Vila gave the trenchant description as being like an "erection". Here she uses the words of an apologetic, somewhat bashful, Bordeu to demonstrate the point:

[...] I am using the term erection because I have not found anything more expressive to convey the idea of what I mean by the disposition of an organ [...] that] undergoes a singular sort of swelling, or increase force.<sup>2</sup>

In her analysis of the expression: "rêve en descendant" (*Le rêve...*, 127-129) Vila uncovers the pornographic end to this "swelling" in the climax of d'Alembert's own masturbatory act that "stimulates the source of his own microscopic animaculae";<sup>3</sup> his friend, Madame de l'Espinasse, as per Vila's commentary, could only wonder "why his heart beats without fear" and "how she can take his pulse when his hands are hidden somewhere".<sup>4</sup> The controversial debate surrounding the status of these "animaculae" in d'Alembert's semen, belongs to a similar one mentioned by Vila concerning "polyps", entities, whose constitution defy the "positive" arrangement of what should have otherwise been understood then as the organism's central nervous system; polyps move though lacking such a system!<sup>5</sup> Speaking through the character Mademoiselle de L'Espinasse, Diderot defends a view of "animaculae" that had become out-of-vogue at the time of writing *Le rêve*:

"Voltaire may make as much fun as he likes about it, but the Eel-monger [*John Needham, an English scientist*] is right—I believe my eyes, I see how many of them there are! How they come and go! How they wriggle around! [...] Less than the drop which I took up on the point of a needle compared to the limitless space which

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<sup>2</sup> Anne C. Vila, *Enlightenment and Pathology: Sensibility in the Literature and Medicine of Eighteenth-Century France*, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1998), 69.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 75.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 69.

surrounds me. An indefinite succession of animalcules in the fermenting atom, the same indefinite succession of animalcules in the other atom which we call the Earth.<sup>6</sup>

Voltaire laughed as any biologist today would at such a notion as “spontaneous generation”, expressed by the eel-monger, a cameo of the eighteenth-century biologist who expounded on such a theory: John Needham. Voltaire’s laughter is the case of increasing preference for an expressiveness of newer and more sophisticated constellations of scientific “facts”, ones whose complexity and systemization purportedly guaranteed their claims to truthfulness. Concurring with Voltaire, the materialist Julian Offray de La Mettrie rebukes Needham in “L’Homme plante” for “daring to conclude from observations made on a single species that the same phenomena must be found in another”<sup>7</sup> is a telling example of an argument that would contradict Diderot’s position of defense. La Mettrie upheld the botanist Claude Joseph Geoffroy as an exemplar of one who makes conclusions only after multiple experimentations and discovery of *specific* parts:

[...] as far as I can judge from [Geoffroy’s] work on the structure and the principle uses of flowers, [he] did more than speculate that plants were fertilised by the powder in their stamen.<sup>8</sup>

But Diderot’s primary focus was on a general metaphysics, one, where objects and their aspects were tied to some common consideration. Any specificity assigned objects as d’Alembert and La Mettrie would both advocate either *multiplies* metaphysics ad infinitum with each newly discovered object becoming the limit of itself, i.e., parameters of its own metaphysics; or renders the term metaphysics *null* altogether. Mary Terrall takes note of these two alternatives when analyzing the bowdlerized form of the entry: “Métaphysique”, written by d’Alembert for inclusion in the *Encyclopédie*. The term ends up reduced to either “codified rules underlying [singular] practices”<sup>9</sup> or the discarded portion of a censored

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<sup>6</sup> Denis Diderot, *Le Rêve de d’Alembert*, (Côte de la Fabrique: Librairie Générale Française, 1984), 8-9. (Emphasis added)

<sup>7</sup> Julian Offray de La Mettrie, ‘Man as Plant’, *Machine Man and Other Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 80.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 80-81.

<sup>9</sup> Mary Terrall, ‘Metaphysics, Mathematics, and the Gendering of Science’, *The Sciences in Enlightened Europe*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 251.

version of the word: “[...] limit[ing] the object of metaphysics to empty and abstract considerations about time, space, matter and spirit, it is despicable science”,<sup>10</sup> respectively. Diderot’s rebuttal in *Le rêve* is anything but a counterattack meant to match d’Alembert point of fact by point of fact - it is purposely non-analytic and devoid of the kind of positive argumentation the likes of d’Alembert would herald as the discourse fit for science. Diderot tranquilizes d’Alembert in prose; makes him sleep and then subjects him to what can only be called a “wet dream”, all for the purpose of dissolving the “positive” boundaries surrounding not only his annunciations but also himself, the annunciator. The claim to dissolve “positive” objects is a significant feature of *littérature pornographique*. This literary tradition was known for the depths it explored in the subterranean regions of the world, hidden beneath what would have been considered custom and dogma - and for the world known by scientists, beneath scientific formalisms. This dissolution of “positivity” raises the possibility of a metaphysical alternative, one present amidst these other two that form from metaphysics’ entry into the Modern age (i.e., multiplication or nullification). This alternative will be foundational to how the argument in this dissertation develops; and the contrast with these other two will provide the needed depth of field to see its relevance cast over the entire intellectual milieu of the period. The terms: “positivity” and “negativity” will respectively fill in for these first two and now this alternative metaphysics and together will constitute indispensable tools for reading Sade amongst his peers and interpreters in posterity. These terms will be shown at the end of this section to approximate how Warman and St-Martin insert Sade into the History of Science. As will soon be shown, contrary to general consensus (the one represented by positions like Warman’s), Sade is not the kind of Modern that many scholars have made him out to be.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

The “positivity” emerging out of the kinds of debates on metaphysics just witnessed had an important impact on future scientific methods. Martin S. Staum saw the resonating influence of the *Encyclopédie* in scientific developments in neurology in the nineteenth century:

[s]ensation itself was an active function [inalienable] from its physiological correlates - the brain, the entire nervous system and internal organs [...] Condillac’s dictum could now appear in a new light.<sup>11</sup>

Metaphysics would be pushed further to even greater *specificity* in the nascent scientific disciplines of the Modern period. However, before this could be done, metaphysics needed its decisive turn towards multiplication and nullification, those orientations following a course towards “positivity”. Nowhere is this turn more salient than in La Mettrie’s appropriation of Albrecht von Haller’s concept of “irritability”, a property of reactivity Haller proposed animated all living tissues and organs. One reason to highlight the theoretical quarrel that ensued between these two significant thinkers of the Enlightenment is to show how contiguous to the turn towards “positivity” is the point left behind, the point, from which a metaphysics of “negativity” will be developed in this dissertation. Staum captures in one swoop the dual properties of a metaphysics of “positivity”, ones La Mettrie forced upon Haller’s conceptualisation of organic life:

La Mettrie had stood Haller on his head to arrive at a monism that was not entirely mechanical. The animist and vitalist physicians would also use inexplicable principles allowing degrees of spiritual activity sometimes scarcely distinguishable from corporeal activity.<sup>12</sup>

Staum tells how La Mettrie saw fit to barricade monism - that formulation of metaphysics fit to capture generality in the widest possible sense - in the very narrow extremities of matter where only multiplications abound, multiplications spoken of earlier as originating from the push towards *specificity*. Nullification is not too far removed from La Mettrie’s intended meaning either as it was Haller’s justifiable worry that infusing spirituality at the extreme edge of matter not only made the question of God irrelevant (and thus raised the spectre of

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<sup>11</sup> Martin S. Staum, *Cabanis: Enlightenment and Medical Philosophy in the French Revolution*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), 198.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

atheism) but also undermined metaphysics itself as it is only work on objects at these extreme points that has any value. This was certainly the growing belief amongst the practitioners of the “positive” sciences of the time. In this paper, the monism that La Mettrie “stood on its head” will be reinverted so that it returns to the original position Haller had intended, a position of general “spirituality”. Although at this point such a strategic move may appear obscure, spoken in a language that unsettles expected standards of reasoned argumentation, by the time this dissertation is completed, this theoretical decision will be wholly justified. To add some theoretical vigor to the term “spirituality”, pneumatology will be used in its stead. This expression has a rich intellectual tradition in the period of study, one that even veers towards relevance in the History of Science. In Chapter 3.2 the theoretical benefit of this conceptualisation will come to fruition when Sade and his methods are considered alongside contemporaries Joseph Priestley and Jeremy Bentham, and theirs. It will be shown that Sade holding intellectual company with these two scientists of the period qualifies greatly the claim he belongs to the modern most side of the ledger of the History of Science.<sup>13</sup>

As was earlier shown, Diderot resorted to erotic measures to dissolve not only the formalisms inherent in d’Alembert’s “positive” method (i.e., his annunciations) but also his self as practitioner (i.e., the annunciator) (p. 3). The practices of scientists were as equally beholden to metaphysical fluctuations as were their methods. *Generality* and *specificity* have just as much bearing on inquirer of objects of science as do the objects of scientific inquiry themselves and this duality will be an important thread, developing throughout this dissertation. Furthermore, pneumatology will be developed to give this duality the semblance of metaphysical unity. But for the time being it is more important to demonstrate how it is that those in posterity have taken Sade, the scientific practitioner, to be on the Modern most side of the historical ledger. One theorist of significantly high repute to broach this issue is

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<sup>13</sup> Bentham’s association with Priestley will also qualify him within the spectrum of science of the Enlightenment as he is typically placed unambiguously on the Modern (nineteenth century) most side. Research by Steven Schaeffer will be indispensable to demonstrate this point.

Michel Foucault in *Les mots et les choses* (1966). In this work, Foucault traces the evolution of the “object” of scientific inquiry from the Classical to the Modern Age and suggests that the threshold of success for Modern science began with the character, Juliette, from Sade’s novel, *Histoire de Juliette, ou les Prospérités du vice* (1797). Sade narrates her adventures in “vice” and the reader discovers only fortune, fame and success. Foucault equates her sister, Justine, from *La Nouvelle Justine ou les Malheurs de la vertu* (1797), to that other time marker in *Les mots et les choses*, that one marking off the Classical Age from the Renaissance, the hapless Don Quixote of Miguel de Cervantes’ work. For Don Quixote and Justine all life’s efforts end in failure at a point Foucault identifies as the horizon of “representation”. Here Foucault frames their failure as *specific* desires facing off against what can only be the *generality* of the world; and losing:

[...] desire and representation communicate only through the presence of Another who represents the heroine to himself as an object of desire, while she herself knows nothing of desire other than its diaphanous, distant, exterior, and icy form as representation.<sup>14</sup>

What travails Don Quixote and Justine in the world is also what travails pre-Modern scientists, who stand against a similar backdrop of *generality* and stand helpless before it. In the case of Juliette, however, Foucault describes a character, whose desire rises to the surface of representation and penetrates its veneer as if *generality* is forced to cede its position to *specificity*.<sup>15</sup> In Part 2 of *Les Mots et les choses* Foucault has the perspicuity to recognize what this metaphysical adjustment entails and it happens to resemble multiplication just outlined at that advance stage of a metaphysics of *positivity*. (But now of course the focus is on practices rather than methods.) Foucault calls the adjustment “man doubling over on himself” and forming the bases of “positive contents of language, labour, and life”,<sup>16</sup> of whose outputs include productions of Modern science. The respective failure and success Sade intimates in

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<sup>14</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of Human Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 228-229.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. ‘[a]fter him [Sade], violence, life and death, desire and sexuality will extend, below the level of representation, an immense expanse of shade [...] in our discourse, in our freedom, in our thought’. (Full Quotation)

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 345.

*Justine* and *Juliette* will be a central theme of this dissertation and Foucault deserves credit for being one of the first to recognize the link. Foucault suggesting that Sade demonstrates what Modern science is is not the same thing as making him out to be a Modern and this dissertation will present Sade as being anything but on the side of a metaphysics of “positivity”. In fairness to Foucault, just because he uses Sade as a forward marker for the Modern age does not mean he claims Sade fits the formal requirements of being Modern, equipped with the appropriate mindset or repertoire of skills. This error is more symptomatic of many in the general field of Sade Studies than Foucault’s concatenation of “Sade” and “Modern”. If anything Sade was a product of the Classical age and never left its orbit although he did engage with what he would have seen as the development of the Modern age in both his pornographic writings and personal involvement with the narrative of the French Revolution. In the following passage Foucault adumbrates a relationship between knowledge and knowers that is highly “negative”, one he describes as “isomorphic” and belonging to the Classical age:

[...] that system was in fact sufficiently constricting to cause the visible forms of knowledge to trace their kinships upon it themselves, as though methods, concepts, types of analysis, acquired experiences, minds, and finally men themselves, had all been displaced at the behest of a fundamental network defining the implicit but inevitable unity of knowledge.<sup>17</sup>

Notably, the modern duality of knower and knowledge being *specific*, or discrete, is not yet the case in this epistemological formulation and Sade, the practitioner of science, happens not to share this make-up. As a way of introducing Sade to those, who may be less familiar with his scientific credentials - and more familiar with his licentious scandals - it is worth itemizing some important aspects of his biography and highlighting those aspects that rise to the level of scientific relevance. But before considering his biography it is worth making a decisive statement about Sade’s position in the history of *littérature pornographique*. How this position has been framed by contemporary theorists is fraught with glaring interpretive

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<sup>17</sup> Michel Foucault, op. cit., 83.

problems. These problems will be considered opportune as they proffer points of contrast, from which to develop content that will prove to be theoretically valuable in this dissertation.

Robert Darnton confirms that the term “pornography” has been used mostly anachronistically by those theorists, who impose a nineteenth-century reading of the word when applying it to an eighteen-century milieu:

But Frenchmen in the eighteenth century did not [...] distinguish a genre of “pure” pornography from erotic fiction, anti-clerical tracts *and other varieties of “philosophical books.”* The notion of pornography [...] was developed in the nineteenth century, when librarians sorted out books that they considered dirty and put them under lock and key in taboo sections [...] the legislation on the book trade under the Old regime [however] always distinguished three categories of forbidden books: those that offended the Church, the State and morality.<sup>18</sup>

One of the misreadings concerns its application to Sade and his oeuvre and here again the problem of “positivity” raised in this introduction is salient. Pornography really became a fixture of science in the mid-nineties with the seminal work of cultural historians like Margaret C. Jacobs and Lynn Hunt; and from this period the *pornographique* tended in a ‘materialist’ direction. In her essay, ‘The Materialist World of Pornography’, Jacobs elevated pornographic discourse to being that “missing link between the social and the metaphysical”,<sup>19</sup> seeing it belonging to either one of two camps: the ‘naturalist’; or the ‘materialist’, with the latter, she claimed, becoming the dominant mode after 1650.<sup>20</sup> She argued that ‘naturalistic’ pornography was highly *metaphysical* and assuming of such beliefs as the dimorphism of gender in body and mind,<sup>21</sup> summing up all such reflections as treating human sexuality as “barn and farmyard”.<sup>22</sup> The “materialist” variant, in contrast, had a de-naturalizing effect: “[...] stripping bodies of textures, color and smell, imbuing them with only motion and de-centring this motion away from the exclusive site of “virile engines”,

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<sup>18</sup> Robert Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996), 87-88. (Emphasis added)

<sup>19</sup> Margaret C. Jacobs, ‘The Materialist Word of Pornography’, *The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity, 1500-1800* (New York: Zone Books, 1996), 160.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 162.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 172.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 164.



even inviting active and energized female participants as well”.<sup>23</sup> All what this added up to was a *multiplication* of the possibilities of desire. Lynn Hunt would continue this line of argument in her exploration of political pornography during the French Revolution. She further developed the “egalitarian implications of atomism”,<sup>24</sup> developed in Jacobs’ interpretation of Hobbesian and Cartesian materialism, adding new atoms to the mix, ones of “active Citizenness”,<sup>25</sup> introduced by the Revolution. In her book, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*, Hunt sees Sade as exceptional in reaching even beyond simply ridiculing social types such as clerics, aristocrats, political figure and prostitutes; he was establishing a theoretical overview for an entirely new political order; one where brotherhoods and sisterhoods of incest replaced conventional morality based on familial and religious sentiment<sup>26</sup> and, of course, all the concomitant desires, e.g., homosexuality, pedophilia, tribadism, bestiality and so on. Based on this interpretation of pornography in the History of Science, Sade is a producer of desires and society itself, and henceforth is adding something supernumerary and ‘positive’ to the natural world. This dissertation will depart from such a presentation as each new “positive” point amounts to a new *specificity*, whose ability to possess desire depends entirely on some kind of *dramatization*. Even in how Sade practiced what this dissertation asserts is his “scientific” ruminations his orientation was anything but “positive” as will now be demonstrated.

Both the scientific methods and practices of Sade in this dissertation will be accepted as possessing a high degree of “negativity”. As for his methods, Sade was highly interdisciplinary and had a keen interest in subterranean themes of the natural and human worlds, ones that presuppose monistic unity and defy categorizations of knowledge. From the contents of one of the crates Sade sent home from one of his trips to Italy during a rare stint

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 128.

of not being in jail in his thirties Neil Schaeffer in his biography on Sade cites Paul Bourdin's observation that Sade had broad interests in history, anthropology, chemistry, natural history, mythology, botany and art - with predilections for marginal objects related to death and sex:

It is a veritable ark. Out of it comes [...] metals, idols, rough stones and carved stones from Vesuvius, a handsome funerary urn perfectly intact [...] a piece of nitrous sulfate, seven sponges, a collection of shells, a small Hermaphrodite, and vase of flowers [...].<sup>27</sup>

These amoral interests and their disjunctive distributions run counter to trends in the Enlightenment that focus on the improvability of humankind and the unity of human knowledge, respectively. These disparate priorities approximate the pessimistic end of a "pessimism-to-optimism" scale, one, which happens to also run parallel to the "negative-to-positive" one being developed now. Jean-Jacques Rousseau is often taken as the exemplar of pessimism in the Enlightenment and the codex to this "negativity" is *Discours sur l'Origine de l'Inégalité* (1755) where he shows the prospect of social progress and enlightenment to be buried under a reality of human barbarism and degeneration, manifest in the very social institutions that purport enlightenment. For optimism in the Enlightenment project, it was the confidence Marquis de Condorcet exuded in writing *Tableau général de la science qui a pour objet l'application du calcul aux sciences politiques et morales* (1793). In this work de Condorcet expressed hope in the "positive" development of all social institutions, expressed even as he was in line to climb the guillotine. Sade will be clearly placed on the Rousseauian side of this scale. Gilbert Lély (1961) in *The Marquis de Sade: A Definitive Biography* corroborates the point that Sade was a pessimist:

The universe [in *Justine*] is nothing but violence and cruelty, the author tells us. Thus we see that quite apart from the sensual and positivistic attitude of the time, in the very first work, which he published, Sade took a stand diametrically opposed to the nature-loving optimism of his age [...].<sup>28</sup>

For practices, Sade's relationship with knowledge has the isomorphism Foucault has just described and erotic focus of Diderot's choice of Bordeu as intellectual ally. Schaeffer

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<sup>27</sup> Neil Schaeffer, *The Marquis de Sade: a Life*, 198.

<sup>28</sup> Gilbert Lély, *The Marquis de Sade: A Definitive Biography* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1961), 385-86.

suggests a way of thinking about Sade and scientific experimentation that is “negative” in conceptualisation. He considers the significance of experiments like that one Sade developed in his famous “hydraulic theory of sexual energy”; the results he shared with his wife in that famous “Vanille et Manille” letter during a bout with a prostate-urinary infection while imprisoned in the Bastille. His description of the symptomology matches the “swelling” and “increasing force” of Bordeu’s earlier descriptions:

Picture a gun charged with a ball, and such a ball whose nature is to grow larger in proportion to its stay in the gun; if you shoot the gun after a few days, the explosion will be mild; if you allow the ball to grow larger, being discharged it will burst the gun.<sup>29</sup>

In another experiment - this time from outside the confines of prison walls - Sade conducts a series of trials with that potentially lethal aphrodisiac, Spanish Fly, during his encounter with the four prostitutes, who became actors in that notorious “Marseilles Affair” (that led to his third stint in prison and set the pattern of him being a recidivist jailbird). Schaeffer argues the dosage Sade used was more for exploring sensations and biochemistry (especially gastrology) than the sexual expediency it would have afforded in making the women more compliant to Sade’s erotic wishes.<sup>30</sup> In addition, Schaeffer takes account of the seduction of his sister-in-law, Anne-Prospère, and his escapade with her to Italy, which precipitated the transformation of a patient and mostly tolerant mother-in-law, Madame de Montreuil, into a relentless enemy, who would pursue Sade with the letter of the law for most of the remainder of his life.<sup>31</sup> This action can be seen as an exploration of incest, a topic of scandal but also wide intrigue as a curious anthropological question. All these experiments take explanations of science to be

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<sup>29</sup>Neil Schaeffer, *The Marquis de Sade: A Life*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 132.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid, 133.

<sup>31</sup>Madame De Montreuil was the principle reason Sade spent most of his life in confinement. A well-connected bourgeois lady with pretensions of upward mobility, Madame De Montreuil used her influence to win the right to hold her scandalous son-in-law in confinement on the behest of the king himself, using a legal instrument called a *lettre de cachet*. This was a confinement based on no other reason than imprisoning a troublesome individual to one’s personal ambitions. This was exercised without recourse to anything resembling *habeas corpus*. The *lettre de cachet* was one of the first institutions of the *ancien regime* to be abolished after the Storming the Bastille. Sade being a prisoner of the Bastille just prior to the Storming - one bearing the yoke of a *lettre de cachet* - made him by default a hero of the Revolution, an experience he exploited to good use throughout his career as a revolutionary.

pessimistically linked to sexual desire and have a reflexivity that defy standards of objectivity that would otherwise separate scientists from their “positive” findings. In method and practice Sade is clearly not on the Modern side of the historical ledger and this once again raises the issue of how Warman and St-Martin place him in the History of Science.

Caroline Warman is one to set Sade to a “positive” scientific tradition. Although she does a good job of taking from the surfeit of scholarship on Sade since 1945 those redeemable moments when Sade is able to be seen through a scientific lens, the equivocation claimed is at the heart of understanding Modern science appears in her argument. For one, she highlights such notables as Marcel Hénaff and his refusal to see Sade distinguishing literature and science:

[...] le corps sadien c’est le corps [...] le lettre n’est pas le sens premier, mais ce que se soustrait à la métaphore, ce que résiste au régime de l’interprétation.<sup>32</sup>

As well, she singles out Annie Le Brun and her recognition that Sade links scientific research with his own metabolic investment as a researcher, describing Sade’s notorious plagiarizing of his scientist contemporaries, e.g., Voltaire, d’Holbach and d’Alembert as “en faisant brûler toutes les abstractions au feu des passions”.<sup>33</sup> By now it is clear that Sade is exhibiting in these two episodes the kind of epistemological isomorphism, shown to be characteristic of a metaphysics of “negativity”. Nevertheless, Warman makes “positivity” her working model for reading Sade into the History of Science, doing so with her double-barreled concept of “sensational materialism”. Each part in this conceptualization is really pushed as far forward as *specificity* would be in *multiplication* and *nullification* (p. 4). If La Mettrie packed irritability at these points, it is only because, without something superadded, “objects” are stretched out so thin they reach terminuses of inertness. Warman even acknowledges this but finds traction in the scaling effects of ‘analogy’, a bridge between disparities like matter/ culture, science/ literature, the maintenance of whose gaps would have been detrimental to

<sup>32</sup> Caroline Warman, *Sade: from materialism to pornography* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2002), 16.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

her presentation of Sade and his oeuvre offering a ‘literal’ reading of the world.<sup>34</sup> And to ‘analogy’ she must add a dynamic force, one she calls “the drama of matter”, including “on stage” reenactments of such forces as attractions, repulsions, hydraulics and electricity. These are the kinds of *dei ex machina* common to materialists like La Mettrie, who recognized the need to animate matter in their materialist systems with some enlivening - often erotic - force of their own. ‘Analogy’ and ‘drama’ fit a literary mold and are inherently “positive”. They not only occupy the inert point at the edge of *specificity* but they are also themselves the stand-alone entities within a metaphysics of *multiplication*. “Sensationism” for one posits one-to-one relationships between perceptions of the outside world and the corresponding ideas in conscious experience and the strength of ideas draws in the entire unity as would be the case for Locke and his “tabula rasa”. The corollary here is that ideas of what things are become substitute realities - just as it has been the case for *multiplications*. If ideas in positions like these become the be-all-and-end-all of use value than nullification has also been reached. For “materialism”, the guiding principle in Sade’s time was atomism, foundational to Enlightenment science ever since Robert Boyle introduced corpuscularianism, which presupposed atoms of matter relate one with another insensitively on one-to-one “cause and effect” bases. Insensitivity barricades “effects” in the objects in question making “causes” ulterior forces rather than distributions of relations amongst sensitive matter. If these objects were corpuscles they would be universes unto themselves and *multiplication* is here again being suggested. And if it is the ideas formed from witnessing corpuscles-cum-objects that are of concern than what has just been said about sensationism applies as well, *mutatis mutandis*. This dissertation asserts that these are the

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<sup>34</sup> Warman borrowed the *Encyclopédie*’s definition of the term: ‘analogy’ to establish her position: ‘[...] the senses are the starting point, via analogy their ‘result’ apply to similar ‘corps’, all made of matter in ‘ses différens arrangement et combinaisons’ and thence to the ‘tout’ that is ‘gouverné’ par des loix generals et constants’ [...] it is a epistemological route, followed by all the thinkers mentioned above [D’Holbach, Helvétius, Condillac, Buffon, Diderot] as well as by Sade’ (Ibid, 24).

kinds of metaphysical conundrum that Sade did not encounter because his metaphysics followed a “negative” course rather than a “positive” one. To get at this “negative” course it is worth consulting Armelle St-Martin; after all she is one of the first to make use of such a theoretical construct.

In her 2007 essay, “Sade’s System of Perversity and Italian Medicine”, St-Martin sees Sade being very much unlike La Mettrie despite some common comparisons. In her analysis in *L’Histoire de Juliette* of Sade’s arch-libertine, Saint-Font, St-Martin appears to be speaking to Diderot and Bordeu’s own reflections on nondescript entities whose only “positive” attribute is an erotic *generality* that could be linked to all three kingdoms of nature.<sup>35</sup> As it was for Saint-Font and his experimentation with “maleficent molecules” with the aim of spreading disease and prolonging death, the corruption of his own being was necessarily participatory in the manner of the duality already presented. St-Martin asserts that Saint-Fond’s “molecules” - and their greater role in that obsolete pneumatological trope of “corruption” - originated from Sade’s 1775 journey to Italy when he encountered for the first time such medical treatises as Dr. Barthélemy’s famous work, *Dissertation ou mémoire historique de l’épidémie qui régna dans Florence*.<sup>36</sup> St-Martin made of Sade’s experimentations one part of a rubric pair: the “esoteric”, contrasting with another, the “scientific”,<sup>37</sup> both happening to work just as well for framing Diderot and d’Alembert (and La Mettrie’s) antipodal positions vis-à-vis Needham’s “animaculae”. These rubrics are: statements a) in “context of a negative progression caused by specific forces”<sup>38</sup> - or, for the purposes of this dissertation, “negativity”; and b) of “uncertainty that accompanies all

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<sup>35</sup> Armelle St-Martin, ‘Sade’s System of Perversity and Italian Medicine’, *Marquis de Sade and the Scientia and Techne of Eroticism* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 33.

<sup>36</sup> The full title is *Dissertation ou mémoire historique de l’épidémie qui régna dans Florence et plusieurs lieux de ses environs dès le mois de janvier et continua jusqu’en juillet 1767*.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 29.

positive explanations”<sup>39</sup> - “positivity”. Clearly a more vigorous rubric is needed to express “negativity” than the nondescript “esoteric” that St-Martin proposes. The preceding section has shown that in the History of Science even the most technical vocabulary of science is open to a multiplicity of meanings. A simple investigation of a concept like *animaculae* has been sketched out to show an entire spectrum of interpretative potential that depends on the metaphysical perspective of the inquirer. A metaphysics of “negativity” was introduced and, even though its counterpart, a metaphysics of “positivity”, is often subsumed in the highly unmetaphysical concept of “fact”-based science, metaphysics was preserved in such notions as *multiplication* and *nullification*. In the next section, how a metaphysics of “negativity” is to be developed in this dissertation will be the subject of investigation. As it turns out the equivocation following a simple scientific term like *animalculae* also does so a concept to be introduced as Sade’s dominate mode of scientific investigation. This term is *sensibilité*.

## 0.2 “Sade and *Sensibilité*”

Warman sought “dramatization” as a way to enliven the inertness at the further most point in a metaphysics of “positivity”. In *Culture of Pain* when David B. Morris takes note of Sade’s exploration of pain and pleasure increasingly taking on medical form - replacing medieval theology as the new “master discourse” for understanding the human condition<sup>40</sup> - he depends as well on dramatization to state his case. Speaking of the four libertines, impersonating demons; their victims, damned souls in that “Hell Game” in the final scene of *Les 120 Journées*, Morris sees Sade substituting the hellfire of theology with nerve impulses and electric fluids of a physiological order.<sup>41</sup> Reflecting on another episode in Sade’s oeuvre, Morris interprets the following words, delivered by the character, Noircueil, in *L’Histoire de Juliette*, as pain and pleasure falling under the order of “sensitivity”:

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> David B. Morris, *The Culture of Pain*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1991), 225.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. 231.

[...] atoms emanating from these foreign objects strike them aslant, crookedly, sting them, repulse them, and never fuse with them [...] whether it be pleasure or pain brewing in us, it will always have a certain impact upon the neural fluids.<sup>42</sup>

“Sensitivity” in this essay will be defined as the superaddition of “drama” to *specific* objects at the positive most end of the “negative-to-positive” spectrum. Sean L. Quinlan in “Sade and Sensibility: Will, Nerves and Altered States in Sade’s *L’Histoire de Juliette*” continues along Morris’ lines, emphasizing how Sade deployed “sensitivity” to express his metaphysical position:

[they] were like little white cords arranged in pairs [...] flat [...] round [...] carrying messages to and fro the brain like [...] pulsating system of Lamson tubes [...] the nerves constitute ‘the soul admitted by modern philosophy’.<sup>43</sup>

Then, later on, Quinlan switches to a more “negative” orientation, citing in Sade’s analysis of death the unity connecting all “three kingdoms”, the same kind of unity Diderot emphasized in his defense of Needham’s *animaculae*:

So rend away hack and hew, torment, break, wreck, massacre, burn, grind to dust, melt, in a world reshape into however many forms all the *productions of the three kingdoms of nature*.<sup>44</sup>

The equivocation between “positivity” and “negativity” here is captured in how Quinlan subsumes both under the rubric “sensibility” in the essay title. What is needed now is a more precise manner of articulating the aspectual differences in the usage of the terminologies “sensitivity” and “sensibility”. Quinlan is not incorrect to ground sensibility in physiology as Haller seems to have done just this when he used the term to distinguish what irritability did to enliven tissues and organ from what sensibility did only to “organs supplied with nerves” that had “the ability to produce sensation”<sup>45</sup> (but of course Haller was not using the terms in the extreme *specific* way as La Mettrie would have done). It turns out that an important attempt has been made in recent years to cover these divergent metaphysical fields of “negativity” and “positivity”, an attempt, pegging *sensibilité* to the “negative” side of the

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Sean Quinlan, ‘Shocked Sensibility: Will, Nerves, and Altered States in Sade’s *L’Histoire de Juliette*’, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, vol. 25, No. 3 (Hamilton: McMaster University, 2013), 18.

<sup>44</sup> Sean Quinlan, op. cit., 35. (Emphasis added)

<sup>45</sup> Taken from the entry for ‘Albrecht von Haller’ in *Encyclopedia of World Biography*, The Gales Group, Inc., 2010, [www.biography.yourdictionary.com](http://www.biography.yourdictionary.com)



spectrum. It is worth turning to Jessica Riskin, who, in *Science in the Age of Sensibility: The Sentimental Empiricists of the French Enlightenment* makes *sensibilité* a relevant topic in the History of Science, something this dissertation aims to do as well.

A sharp contrast in orientation comes through in how Vila and Riskin present Sade as a scientist in his time. Vila asserts that Sade - through his fictional libertines - sought out tirelessly even more intense sensations and “facts” about the body’s reactive properties.<sup>46</sup> She emphasizes both his keenness in keeping up-to-date with medical advancements and flexibility in peppering his metaphysical arguments with the most germane of scientific terminologies of the time. Presenting a very different position on Sade’s scientific practices, Riskin broaches the topic of *sensibilité* and presents it in an entirely different manner than what has just been presented as its synonymy with “sensitivity”. *Sensibilité* for Riskin is a salient “renunciation of [the] understanding”<sup>47</sup> that comes from dependence on positive “facts” and she identified those who take up such renunciations as moral scientists. She gives the example of the young lawyer, Maximilien Robespierre, and the precedent he set in his legal victory in defending de Vissery de Bois-Valé’s right to erect a lightning rod on the roof of his house. She links this micro-debate on electricity during the trial to that greater one pitting Benjamin Franklin against his nemesis, Jean-Antoine Nollet, finding the parallel in Robespierre and Franklin’s belief in the perilous “interpretability of facts” that comes with truth claims such as those given by the prosecution and Nollet, respectively. If a prosecutor has the subtlety to convince a judge that electricity can jump from metal to wood and cause a house fire; and then win his case; all Nollet needs to do to explain the nature of electricity is to produce “facts” that supports his mechanical position, regardless of whether they are actually true or not. To inoculate truth statements from the arbitrariness that comes whenever explanations meet private (*specific*) interests, Robespierre and Franklin recommended

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<sup>46</sup> Anne C. Vila, op. cit., 289.

<sup>47</sup> Jessica Riskin, *Science in the Age of Sensibility: The Sentimental Empiricists of the French Enlightenment*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002), 181.

limiting knowledge to *general* notions and wide acceptance, in other words, those parameters of “negativity” established in the previous “Theory” section.<sup>48</sup> Riskin places Sade in the “negative” camp; she even calls him a “moral radical”.<sup>49</sup> She takes note of how Sade saw new sensations and ideas, emerging from the hypothetical addition of a new sense to the preexisting repertoire of five. She reads in Sade’s position here the “moral spectrum” of senses Diderot made famous in his 1749 *Lettre sur les aveugles*,<sup>50</sup> arguing that Sade worked backwards from conventions, assumptions and “facts” when he proposed:

[...] our laws, our virtues, our vices, our gods, would be contemptible in the eyes of a society having two or three senses more than us, and a sensibility double what ours is.<sup>51</sup>

*Sensibilité* in this dissertation will be shown to be on the opposite end of the spectrum from *raison* and because it is so it will be presented as a mode of investigating the world that is highly corrosive to not only statements of “facts” but also constitutions of specificity (individualism) that make these statements possible. (This relationship will be central to the notion of pneumatology to be developed.) *Sensibilité* will have the relational focus to be both folksy (i.e., able to unite with Common Sense wisdom) and imaginative (i.e., able to unite with objects at distances). It is worth giving an example of this latter focus as imagination is privileged in *sensibilité*. In addition, the example demonstrates how amongst the moral scientists of the period of study there is a plurality of voices, some of whom fall on the side of “positivity”. David Hume is an example and he will be shown to be an integral part in shaping the argument in this dissertation.

David Hume is often credited for having laid the foundation for the moral sciences, which are precursors of what is known today as “human sciences”. Built into *A Treatise of*

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<sup>48</sup> Riskin corroborates this point this way: ‘Certain materials were ‘suited by their nature to receive’ electricity, while electricity had a ‘predilection’ for metal; it was thus ‘physically impossible’ for electrical matter to jump from a metal bar to a wood house. These were facts. Electrical action was ‘no longer a mystery’ but was now ‘an elementary principle’” (Ibid).

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 61.

<sup>50</sup> A thought experiment based on Locke’s ‘[The blindman,] Molyneux’s Problem’, for Diderot ‘[The blindman Professor] Saunderson’s Problem’.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 61.

*Human Nature* are the seeds of those two sets of principles, used for exploring the human subject as an object of science. In his thought experiment on the colour blank between two known shades of blue, Hume argue it is possible, absent prior experience with the impression of this blank, for imagination to intervene and fill in the gap. However, this was an exceptional case for him, arguing that “first ideas are supposed to be derived from impressions” arriving from observations from first-hand experiences.<sup>52</sup> The loophole Hume leaves open here amidst what is otherwise the security of empirical (“positive”) knowledge is the same one Sade and his ilk would later exploit in their respective scientific studies. The next step going forward is to justify the existences of the kinds of objects formed by such a moral force as imagination, those objects very much unlike what Hume characterizes as “first ideas [...] from impressions”.

### 0.3 Objects

The typical treatment of objects in the tradition of “positivity” has followed the pattern of handling ideas and impressions in one-to-one relationships just as Hume has shown. Even before and after this example, consultations with the theories of Locke and Condillac would respectively confirm this point more broadly. This dissertation will depart from this epistemological tradition and propose an alternative befitting the camp of philosophers, to which Sade belonged. The following three propositions will act as guides for exploring this alternative:

- 1) Objects” are imbued with differing degrees of “negativity” and “positivity”;
- 2) No distinction will be made between “objects” occupying physical and psychic fields;
- 3) Passion is the solvent that dissolves “objects”.

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<sup>52</sup> David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (London: Penguin Book, 1985), 54.

The following three sub-sections will establish the most important methodological points for how Sade will be considered amongst his peers and interpreters in posterity. In addition, engaging with more recent philosophical reflections on themes pertinent to those discussed in this introduction will demonstrate the enduring relevance of Sade.

“Objects” are imbued with differing degrees of “negativity” and “positivity”

Rousseau, that philosophe, famous for his capacity for *sensibilité*, confirms the existences of “objects” that lack the kinds of “positive” contours that were just attributed to Locke, Hume and Condillac. The equivocation, to which this introduction has dedicated its theoretical focus, appears once again in that planned but never completed work by Rousseau, *Morale sensitive, ou Le Matérialisme du sage*, and the source of the equivocation is found in Rousseau’s conceptions of “objects”. Vila suggests that what Rousseau meant by materialism was the “positive” regime of calibration for the promotion of health and happiness, citing the pertinent “objects” from a passage from Rousseau’s *Confessions*:

Rousseau imagined undertaking through the impressions made upon his sensitive system by such external forces as “the seasons, sounds, colors, darkness, light, the elements, food, noise, silence, motion, rest.”<sup>53</sup>

It is better to situate these “objects” as parts of that much older scientific tradition, the “non-naturals” of Galenic physiology, whose materiality can in no way be of the same “positivity” beginning to take hold in object formations in science in Rousseau’s time. The terms “materialism” and “sensitivity” designated as “positive” earlier on in this introduction swing for Rousseau sharply towards “negativity”. Resolving the contradictory uses of these terms is possible only when “objects” are taken as imbued with differing degrees of “negativity” and “positivity”, something which will be accepted in this dissertation. But this claim has theoretical precedence in the period of study and it is worth introducing a significant discussant to this point: Baron d’Holbach.

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<sup>53</sup> Anne C. Vila, op. cit., 183.

In his sweeping sociological survey of polytheism and monotheism in *Système de la Nature*, Vol. 2, d'Holbach sees in the evolution of each one an incremental shift away from pure "action" towards something that would increasingly take on "object" form. Beginning with polytheistic societies like the ancient Greeks he saw their multiple deities, laws and attributions of natural phenomena all coming under a "negative" order of such designations as "soul of the universe" or "universe as God".<sup>54</sup> But in their idol-worship he saw how

[...] allegory masqued the mode of action; it was at length parts of this great whole, that idolatry represented by statues and symbols.<sup>55</sup>

This was a beginning of a siphoning off of "action" from the absolute "negativity" of what action necessarily is. As for the later development, monotheism, d'Holbach described "leisurely" metaphysicians and theologians as "subtilly" partitioning off "nature from herself" and from nature's "energy" creating an "incomprehensible being" "personified", one part "congenial" when favorable to man, the other "inimical" when unfavorable.<sup>56</sup> This being would evolve into that God set "positively" apart yet endowed with "negative" qualities worthy of worship: "infinitude", "omnipresence" and "omnipotence"; and all the while still purportedly capable of interacting with material ("positive") objects in the natural and human worlds. The conundrum, which this interaction entails: a squabble over how it can even be possible for something immaterial to interact let alone create something material, was really an early debate over the problem of objects in metaphysics. In his chapter "Examination of the Proofs of the Existence of the Divinity, as given by [the theologian Samuel] Clark", d'Holbach throws down the gauntlet to his readers by backstopping the whole concern of this interaction in motion:

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<sup>54</sup> Paul Henri Thierry Baron d'Holbach, *The System of Nature*, Vol. 2 (Teddington: The Echo Library, 2006), 27.  
 \* '[...] these famous sages, those legislators, those priests, those conquerors, who were the instructors of infant nations, themselves adored active nature, or the great whole considered relatively to its different operations and qualities [...]. It was the great whole they deified; it was its various parts which they made their inferior gods; it was from the necessity of her laws they made fate. The Greeks called it Nature, a divinity who had a thousand names. Varro says "I believe that God is the soul of the universe, and that the universe is God [...]"'. (Full quotation)

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 30.

[...] in making their gods immutable, render them immoveable, consequently they cannot act [...] If God be the author of all things, as well as of the motion and of the combination of matter, he is unceasingly occupied in producing and destroying; in consequence, he cannot be called immutable [...].<sup>57</sup>

However, what is more interesting, and an untapped line of inquiry, is not how such a divine entity can even interact with its creation (though this is still today a valid concern) but rather how humankind can even conceive of and interact with “objects” of such negative qualities and, what’s more, what it is that gives these negatives-cum-positives any value at all. D’Holbach shows his “materialist” true colors in missing such a line of inquiry when he denigrates the question being elicited here:

Theology, after all, has seldom done more than personify this eternal series of motion; the principle of mobility inherent to matter: it has clothed this principle with human qualities [...].<sup>58</sup>

Cannot the same thing be said of materialists, who allow this same manner of personification for the *specific* qualities they transcribe into their own conceptions of nature as has already been sufficiently demonstrated in discussions of “dramatization”? In *L’idée d’énergie au tournant des Lumières (1770-1820)* Michel Delon confirms this criticism this way:

[L’énergie] bouscule les manichéismes moraux et esthétiques et les dualisme littéraire dépasse une opposition statique du plaisir et de la douleur, du bien et du mal, de la beauté et de la laideur. L’idée d’énergie aide le matérialiste à réunifier la matière et le mouvement, le corps et l’âme, et le spiritualiste à repenser les rapports régissant les deux principes don’t il maintient l’antagonisme.<sup>59</sup>

It is on the very constitution of objects where “sensibility” and “sensitivity” have already been shown to diverge so handling “objects” differently is just what is needed for showing just how Sade’s oeuvre is different. Delon distinguishes Sade from many of his eighteenth-century contemporaries, who fall victim to “l’opération par laquelle l’idéalisme récupérait les acquis de la physique modern”; Delon argues that Sade is different because his “œuvres [...] n’est pas une aérolithe, hapax [...]”.<sup>60</sup> Sade set apart in this way places him in a position to offer unique reflections.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 65.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. 81.

<sup>59</sup> Michel Delon, *L’idée d’énergie au tournant des Lumières (1770-1820)* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1988), 517.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

A modern reflection of “objects” imbued with different degrees of “negativity” and “positivity” has been given by John Haugeland in *Having Thought: Essays on the Metaphysics of the Mind*. Haugeland distinguishes between “objects” in the world that belong to reproducible set patterns of application - he calls them “tokens” of a digital format - and those ones that are not:

[Analog:] Variations are smooth or continuous, without “gaps”. There are no click-stops, or forbidden intermediate positions on a slide rule or a rheostat [...] This is everyone’s aboriginal intuitive idea of analog systems; unlike [digitalized] switches, abacuses, or alphabetic inscriptions, every setting or shape (within the relevant range) is allowed - nothing is ill-formed.<sup>61</sup>

Objects will be given an “analog” handling in this dissertation because it is believed in digitalized form they are beholden to the same inertness coming on the “positive” most point in a metaphysics of “positivity”, the point of *specificity* where *dramatization* is needed to animate. Haugeland even corroborates this point himself when he argues human relations mediated by “tokens” amounts to “games” - calling out even those ones concerned with the output of scientists.<sup>62</sup>

“No distinction will be made between “objects” occupying physical and psychic fields”:

The philosophical tradition of seeing synonymy in “objects” of the mind and world is well encapsulated in Proposition 7 of “Of the Mind” in *Ethics* when Spinoza claims: “the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things”.<sup>63</sup> The problem to which Spinoza offers his solution can be summed up as the interference “objects” pose in psychic-to-physical reductions (or vice versa). A more contemporary attempt at a solution to the problem, which happens also to be a significant stumbling block in the unity between natural and human sciences is that famous test of supervenience. Haugeland describes the test this way:

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<sup>61</sup> John Haugeland, *Having Thought: Essays on the Metaphysics of the Mind*, 82-83.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 87.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 35.

[...] a way of tightening the grip that the physical has on the possible, without having to say that only propositions expressible in language of physics can be true or that only individuals in the domain of physics can exist.<sup>64</sup>

It can be said that the epistemological problem of uniting physical and psychic events is due to the objects involved being necessarily *specific*. Heidegger confirms the inertness of *specificity* in his lamentation of the “scandal of philosophy”, which for him was the problem of philosophers continuously setting out to prove the world by trying to establish relations between Being-present-at-hand of inner Consciousness and Being-present-at-hand of outer Things.<sup>65</sup> Simply put, the sceptical concern for the material world not existing comes by way of a salient lack of an indubitable anchor holding these relations in tandem. Any delay, or gap, no matter its minuteness amounts to a kind of hearsay - or, better an “interpretation”. “Dasein always comes ‘too late’”<sup>66</sup> is how Heidegger put it. Even after the presentation of his “positive” “Ontological Interpretation” Heidegger recognized the persistence of the problem of “interpretation” in his conception of the “eclipse”:

[t]he existential Interpretation of Dasein’s historicity is constantly getting *eclipsed* unawares. The obscurities are all the harder to dispel when we have not disentangled the possible dimensions [... like] motion.<sup>67</sup>

Even though he failed to overcome the “eclipse”, he suggests a way forward in his emphasis on the “negative” concept “motion”, which presupposes some “untangling” of objects on both sides of the epistemological divide, the physical and psychic one. Heidegger’s take on “motion” dialogues in an interesting way with D’Holbach’s presentation raised in the previous sub-section.

A solution, more fitting to the context of Sade is given by Riskin in her discussion of the scientific debate surrounding the behavior of electricity seen through that famous eighteen-century invention, the Leyden jar. Riskin summarizes two competing methods of

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<sup>64</sup> John Haugeland, op. cit., 101

<sup>65</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1962), 247.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 250.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 444. (Emphasis added)



explanation: the Franklinist and Nolletist, and even gives a period version of what constituted the problem of reductionism supervenience in more recent years has aimed to correct:

Adopting a calculus of moral certainties was not only wise but good: it had moral benefits, while an insistence on absolute, mathematical certainty was morally detrimental. A person who subordinated quantitative evaluation to concrete purposes, who understood all values as meaningful only in relations to other values, was thereby integrated into a world of interacting agents: electrically overcharged and undercharged bodies, market exchanges of money for goods. In contrast, one who saw the world in terms of discrete, absolute values was blind to the interaction of its parts and carried out his reckoning in abstracted isolation.<sup>68</sup>

In her analysis of the issue Riskin anticipates proposition #3, which is next to come in this section, when she posits as a solution to the conundrum of the unity of physical and psychic events: a focus on “appetites, desires and tendencies”.<sup>69</sup> If - as was stated - physical and psychic events are irreconcilable because the objects involved are necessarily *specific - moral events* are not because they decline towards generality or - put another way - they emphasize relationality. To look again on the problem Heidegger encountered in the previous paragraph, *sensibilité* offers objects the theoretical possibility to hold positions in synonymy and simultaneity, doing so on account of the scope of *generality* made possible by a metaphysics of “negativity”. It is as if at a certain *ecliptic* point of alignment, all objects inorganic, organic and conceptual alike stand at some nadir where any proximal shift leftwards or right (i.e., any shift towards *specificity*) constitutes a cracking open of the floodgates to the necessity of having to confront all in contingency and infinitude (or *in toto* in coevality). *Coevality* is the failed point of “interpretation”.

“Passion is the solvent that dissolves ‘objects’”

In their collaborative work, “What Would an Adequate Philosophy of Social Science Look Like (?)”, Brian Fay and J. Donald Moon establish a cognate of the disjunction just developed between the physical and psychic: the physical and social in their definition of “intentional content”:

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<sup>68</sup> Jessica Riskin, op. cit., 92.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 86.

[...] a given movement counts as a vote, a signal, a salute [...] only against the background of a set of applicable rules and conventions [as concepts] and the purposes of the actor involved to be overcome [...].<sup>70</sup>

They go on to say that it is only by means of a “conceptual solvency of a ‘natural science of man’”<sup>71</sup> that there is any hope of unity, being achieved between the physical and social beyond mere *interpretation*. With a theoretical apparatus to allow for “solvency”, i.e., the possibility to decline from “positivity” to “negativity”, the solvent to be used in this dissertation can now be introduced: *passion*. Theoretically, passion has a long history in the study of what constitutes objects in the world. Spinoza for one saw passion as the metaphysical action that worked against the canopy, containing the aggregate of all physical actions (and perforce all causes and effects) - the canopy, which was God at “rest”. In Spinoza’s words “God is the immanent, not the transitive, cause of all things (Proposition 18 in ‘Of God’)”.<sup>72</sup> Absolute restfulness is absolute “positivity” and Spinoza confirms this point when he laments passion’s “negative” influence on knowledge in the scholium to Proposition 3 of “Of the Affects”:

[...] the passions are not related to the mind except insofar as it has something which involves negation, or, insofar as it is considered as a part of Nature which cannot be perceived clearly and distinctly through itself, without the others.<sup>73</sup>

If inertness precedes movement; and what Spinoza calls “adequate” knowledge precedes all other forms both are moored to some divine fixture at “rest”; are foundationally “positive”; and are built by Spinoza using mathematical scaffolding. More recently, Sartre blames *inertness* on what he sees as the failure of Heidegger’s metaphysical system. In *L’Être et le Néant*, Sartre intuits the salient lack of “motion” in the Heidegger’s system, one Sartre (through Hazel E. Barnes) claims ends up only as “suspension”.<sup>74</sup> Sartre demonstrated this

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<sup>70</sup> Brian Fay and J. Donald Moon, ‘What Would an Adequate Philosophy of Social Science Look Like (?)’, in *Introductory Readings in Philosophy of Science*, E.D. Klemke (ed.), (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1998), 172-73.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics* (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 16.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Hazel E. Barnes, ‘Translator’s Introduction’, in *Being and Nothingness*, (New York: Washington Square Press, 1984), xxviii.

point by showing how Heidegger got entangled in the web of his own two-way conceptualization:

Man is a being of distances. In the movement of turning inward which traverses all of being, being arises and organizes itself as the *world* without there being *either priority of the movement over the world, or the world over the movement*.<sup>75</sup>

Sartre goes on to use passion as the solvent to dissolve this “suspension”, which is really a state of motion not too different than the “positive” quality of Spinoza’s concept of “rest”. Even though his theoretical model is outside the purview of how Sade and his ilk will be considered in this dissertation, Sartre deserves credit for at least having the intuition to see a need to prioritize passion:

[a]ll [the inner workings of the relationship between the self and the external world] happens as if the For-itself had a *Passion to lose itself* in order that the affirmation “world” might come to the In-itself. Of course this affirmation exists only for the For-itself; it is the For-itself itself and disappears with it.<sup>76</sup>

The failures of Spinoza and Heidegger fall on the same inertness developed in this introduction at the “positive” most end of the “negative-to-positive” spectrum presented, the end populated exclusively by *specific* objects. Objects need to be able to be discussed without falling into *specificity* and the final component before this dissertation can begin is offering a “negative” conception of objects. This will be presented as a heuristic, which will be called the “posteriority-anteriority-interiority” complex.

“Objects” throughout this dissertation will be defined as entities with some level of strength and tightness of boundary (i.e., gradients of “positivity”), entities that play a role in the operation of dynamic systems: entities mythical and metaphysical; of a physical, event and conceptual constitution; or possessing aspectual, qualitative or quantitative values - in the latter case, reducible to mathematical and geometric forms. Implied here is that these “objects” are by no means equal in their “positivity”. “Objects” are also all those, for which the aforementioned series of “objects” has meaning (i.e., the inquirers) and the unity between these two positions will be held together by the conceptualization of pneumatology

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<sup>75</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1984), 51. (Emphasis added)

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 296.

introduced in this dissertation. Developing a way to distinguish the different grades of “negativity” and “positivity” will be one of the aims of this dissertation. Any grading scheme must take into account the influence of “negativity”, with whose increased intensification “positive” boundaries become less fixed and resonate with a stronger dimension of relationality. The scheme must be able to account for different modulations of relationality, whose changes arrive due to different *passionate* engagements with objects in the world.

“Objects” will be developed using a three-staged heuristics that help situate their variability at different stages of history. The “object” imbued with the highest degree of “negativity” will be the one guided by *taxis*, which, according to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary is the “reflex translational or orientational movement by a freely motile and usually simple organism in relations to a source of stimulation (as a light or a temperature or chemical gradient”.<sup>77</sup> This movement is *posterior* because the object of desire sought is highly indirect vis-à-vis the object doing the seeking. The next, less negative object will be the one guided by *tropism*, which is a direct turning towards a stimulus (e.g., food) - situated to the front, or *anterior*. Higher-order organisms with high degrees of motility belong to this category. An organism related to an object of desire in high posteriority (*taxis*) actually stands at a further distant from this object compared to one related in higher anteriority despite the fact that in hard distance the object in posteriority may even be more proximate than the one in anteriority. In this dissertation, the terms “distance” and “proximity” will replace “generality” and “specificity” as the theoretical device to be operationalized because the former pair captures more precisely the interactional nuance of “desiring” objects, although the orientations of “negativity” and “positivity” apply to both the same. Finally, the third heuristic, “interiority”, will be shown to mark a particular orientation towards objects, one emerging from a crucial turning-point in human history, one emerging during the French

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<sup>77</sup> Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, an Encyclopædia Britannica Company, [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary), 2015.

Revolution. The significance of this turn will be corroborated by Foucault, who has already spoken of the pivotal turn from the Classical to the Modern age and in *The History of Sexuality* even speaks of the emergence of a new species in this same period, describing it - in Carla Freccero's summary - not as a "specific identities or practices" but "changing official discourses" and "modalities of power".<sup>78</sup> He frames his assertion around the peculiar development of homosexuality out of historical sodomy. Although too involved a theoretical construct to develop at this point, what can be said about sodomy - as it pertains to the "negative-positive" spectrum just developed - is that if reproductive sexuality is orientated towards "positivity" sodomy will be orientated towards "negativity" and this will have important implications for the kinds of conclusions to come out at the end of this dissertation. This presentation of "negativity" raises the last important issue related to passion and it happens to be a namesake of this dissertation: *discovery*.

The choice of underpinning this dissertation under the rubric: "discovery" is also in keeping with the avoidance of the problem of objects, established in this introduction. To say Sade avoids the problem of "interpretation" is no new proposition. Warman cited Hénaff earlier taking Sade's writing to be "literal" because it "se soustrait à la métaphore" and "résiste au régime de l'interprétation". What's more, Sade avoids outright the body; it becomes itself its own terminus as Hénaff explains:

Take a (human) body, strip it of all its symptoms, free this impassive matter of all expression, give a detailed description of its parts, just as you would a machine's, and connect it to other bodies, for no grander purpose than sexual gratification. In this way, at one stroke you will drain the metaphorical reservoir, eliminate the infinite network of causality that depends on it, destroy the material "proper" to narrative and dash the very concept of literature.<sup>79</sup>

The removal of the human body from sexual gratification necessarily shifts the purview beyond the "positive" privilege humankind is typically given especially concerning sexuality and its teleological end: generation. The opening up of the possibility of handling sexuality in

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<sup>78</sup> Carla Freccero, *Queer/ Early/ Modern* (Duke University Press, 2005), 34-35.

<sup>79</sup> Marcel Hénaff, *Sade: The Invention of the Libertine Body* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1999), 18.

much broader and more “negative” terms requires a new conceptualisation. In this dissertation “discovery” dethrones the privilege given sexuality where it resides in individual bodies and ascends to the most “negative” conceptualisation of sexuality possible, one able to possibly incorporate in its range all four kingdoms: the mineral, the vegetable, the animal and the human. In other words, in Sade vanquishing “proximal” concerns for sexuality from individuals and species (e.g., tribes of humankind); he shifts the focus to much more “distal” themes. Although counterintuitive considering his notoriety as a pornography/ philosopher this dissertation will ultimately present Sade without sex.

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#### **0.4 The Works of Sade**

One of the strategic decisions to be made in this dissertation is to focus exclusively on what have often been called Sade’s minor works: *Les 120 Journées de Sodome* (1785), *Aline et Valcour ou le Roman philosophique* (1793) and *Philosophie dans le boudoir* (1795). All three span important phases of the French Revolution and their chronological positions help draw out vital themes concerning the social, political and intellectual changes afoot during the Revolution. Notably absent in this dissertation will be Sade’s major works *La Nouvelle Justine, ou les malheurs de la vertu* (1797) and *Histoire de Juliette, ou les Prospérités du vice* (1797), which together constitute a metaphysical diptych and are Sade’s most advanced and global statement of metaphysics in his oeuvre. Limitations of scope aside, two other reasons for bracketing these works out in this dissertation are as follows: a) these works lack the historical immediacy of the minor ones in being written later in Sade’s life when he had the benefit of hindsight to reflect more systematically on the themes he encounters during the most active period of his writing career; b) the works have already been used by Foucault in his own conceptualisation of the evolution of the object of scientific inquiry from the Classical to the Modern age in *Les mots et les chose*. It is a more worthwhile endeavor to find

a new test for deploying Sade in the History of Science and to see how it is that the works, written in real-time during actual events of the French Revolution, either corroborate or depart from Foucault's thesis. In many ways, this dissertation sets up the parameters for a much more in-depth look at *Justine* and *Juliette*, parameters quite skeletal in Foucault's presentation. This in-depth look will be deferred to a later point after the completion of this dissertation.

## Chapter One

Epistemology of a Reverie**1.1 Metaphysical Autobiographies**

Upon setting out to write what would be the final work of his illustrious literary career, Rousseau made the point of clarifying his intention not to undertake the same exercise Michel de Montaigne had done in his 1588 essay, “De l’experience”, which ended up actually being one of his final works. In his “Première Promenade” in his *Les rêveries du promeneur solitaire* Rousseau distinguished his project this way:

I undertake the same enterprise Montaigne did, but for a direct contrary purpose; he wrote his Essays only for others, I my Reveries intirely for myself. If in my more advanced age and on the verge of dissolution I remain [...] in the same disposition I shall reflect on reading these Reveries, the pleasure I experienced on writing them; and thus, recalling pastime shall redouble my existence. Even in spite of mankind, I shall yet enjoy the charms of society and, when decrepit with age, hold converse with myself, as I now should with a friend younger than I am.<sup>80</sup>

What is the meaning behind this adamant exclusion of his potential readers from concern for the aim of his book? And what is Rousseau saying, by way of a subtle criticism, of Montaigne’s effort to enlighten his readers? The answers to these questions happen to concern not only Sade’s life and work but also the problem of “objects” established in the introduction.

*Rêveries* was really the next phase of a writing approach Rousseau had begun in his *Confessions*. He had set about curtailing the custom in literature of making of an author’s biography something of direct appeal to an audience at large, one including in its ranks critics, admirers and those of their progeny, who would one day be future readers. What then did this curtailment entail? It had always been the case that “biographies” of celebrated figures were essentially those of members of the audience as well (if the anachronism of such a term “biography” can be momentarily allowed). In essence, kings, saints and legendary heroes never had total control over what ended up on pages as “biographical” details whether written

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<sup>80</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau Citizen of Geneva Part the First To which are added The Reveries of a Solitary Walker* (London: G.G. and J. Robinson, M.DCC.XCVI), 198.



by an interlocutor or posthumously by a chronicler; and if it was the case of an “autobiographical” exercise like that of Saint Augustine and his *Confessiones*, biographical details were meant to exemplify an ideality worth emulating, in Augustine’s case piety and obedience, the highest aim for every good (audience) member within the community of believers.<sup>81</sup> Rousseau presented himself foibles and all, a list including such notables as his sexual proclivities to passive whipping acquired from being disciplined by his babysitter, Mlle Lamercier; his sexual encounter with his “Mama”, Madame de Warens; his admission of abandoning all five of his illegitimate children to lives of poverty in orphanages; and those narrations of dysfunction he shared with friends and associates like Diderot, Voltaire and one could have included Hume to the list had Rousseau appended a “Livre XIII” to his *Confessions*. The opening statement of his *Confessions* did more than just prepare his readers for the unsavory aspects of his own biography; he introduced a literary format whereby the traditional distance between author and audience appears to merge:

Simply myself. I know my own heart and understand my fellow man. But I am made unlike any one I have ever met; I may be no better, but at least I am different. Whether Nature did well or ill in breaking the mould, in which she formed me, is a question which can only be resolved after the reading of my book.<sup>82</sup>

However, when writing *Rêveries*, this heightened concentration of Rousseau’s position as author ended up as severance with his audience, a severance commentators have often expressed in morbid terms as mental illness, with the typical symptomology: hypochondria, hallucinations, schizophrenia and mania, making the list. The epistemological feature of these rêveries will prove indispensable in how Sade dialogues with Rousseau and his metaphysical project; and how he goes on to extend it.

In a 1783 letter in the early period of his literary career, Sade complained to his wife about how prison rules at Vincennes banned *Confessions* from entering his cell. This was so despite Sade’s claim Rousseau’s strict and severe ethics and religion motivated him towards

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<sup>81</sup> Autobiographies by the famous Renaissance figures Benvenuto Cellini and Gerolamo Cardano are exceptions to this trend in their unflattering portrayals and unfiltered prose about themselves.

<sup>82</sup> Jean-Jacque Rousseau, *The Confessions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (New York: Penguin Books, 1953), 17.

self-improvement<sup>83</sup> and, more peculiarly, despite the fact other scientific texts of strident atheism could enter with little care or oversight. Sade notes the contradiction:

To refuse me Jean-Jacques' *Confessions*, now there's an excellent thing, above all after having sent me Lucretius and dialogues of Voltaire that demonstrates great judiciousness, profound discernment in your spiritual guides.<sup>84</sup>

This executive decision by prison authorities to deny Sade access to *Confessions* while allowing atheistic works to flow in freely appears at first glance to be contradictory until one considers the epistemological exuberance not shared with these other texts. This exuberance is deeply incompatible with regimes of order be they religious, legal or otherwise - much more so than what could constitute challenging scientific discourse but discourse easily assimilated within some institutional framework. This exuberance was central to not only how Sade developed as a writer but also how he should be located within the scientific discourse of his age. Rousseau and Montaigne are good departure points for engaging with Sade as the two made of reveries something of scientific concern but, more importantly for the beginning portion of this chapter, their work challenges some of the ready-made assumptions assumed to inform understanding of the History of Science in the Enlightenment and Sade's placement therein. The germaneness of Montaigne's work proves that enduring influence of a French tradition of skeptical epistemology. As for Rousseau, his approach of *sensibilité* in his scientific writings offer unique reflections on key terms in the History of Science such as "objects" and materialism.

## 1.2 Armelle St-Martin and the History of the Evanescent Object of Science

Well-versed in texts of Greek but more strongly Latin antiquity; immersed in the scientific and philosophical trends of the Renaissance, Montaigne is an enduring symbol of how older sources of knowledge could resonate in the scientific and philosophical milieu of

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<sup>83</sup> Richard Seaver and Austryn Wainhouse, trans., 'Letter IV (1783)', *Marquis de Sade: Justine, Philosophy in the Bedroom, & Other Writings*, trans. Richard Seaver, Austryn Wainhouse (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 134.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, 133.

the French Enlightenment. Such a homegrown “other” source of knowledge challenges in some ways St-Martin’s thesis on the scientific origins of Sade’s oeuvre. In her collaboration with Valerio Cantafio Casamaggi in *Sade et l’Italie*, she foregrounds Sade’s “other” knowledge of science in his two voyages to Italy:

[...] car si le Voyage [...] peut être considéré comme la seulement authentique œuvre de jeunesse du marquis, sa connaissance directe de l’art, de l’histoire, des science et de la médecine italiens influencera toutes ses œuvre ultérieures.<sup>85</sup>

It is certainly true that Sade learned a great many things in Italy that would have been difficult to acquire in a scientific climate in France trending towards fact-driven empirical approaches under the aegis of the likes of Condillac, the Encyclopedistes and Voltaire, their “propagandist-in-chief”. However, countertrends did exist that could have set Sade on his scientific pursuit even without ever having met on his travels Barthélemy Mesny, whom St-Martin designated as one of Sade’s major influences. But St-Martin’s contention does “beg the question”: was it not the case that Sade arrived in Italy already knowing what he had in mind to discover? St-Martin even suggests as much when she links Sade’s Italian voyage to that unique feature of his own genealogy: an ancient relative of the Sade family, Laure de Noves, the “love object” in Petrarch’s famous sonnets<sup>86</sup> and subject of dreams for a young Sade; and “[d]ès son enfance, le marquis sera imprégné de la culture, de la langue et de l’art italiens”.<sup>87</sup> Schaeffer describes one dream sequence recounted by Sade later in one of his letters to his wife, which included the following passage from Petrarch’s sonnet: “O you who

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<sup>85</sup> Armelle St-Martin, Valerio Cantafio Casamaggi, *Sade et l’Italie* (Paris: Éditions Desjonquères, 2010), 8.

<sup>86</sup> In the following passage Gilbert Lély gives evidence of the historical claim that Laure de Noves belonged to the Sade family tree: ‘Laure [...] died on April 6<sup>th</sup> 1348, a victim of the plague, on the same day, in the same month and at the very same hour that Petrarch had first set eyes on her. She was buried in the monastery church of Avignon, which contained the Sade family tomb. When passing through the city in 1533, King François had her grave opened. In the coffin were found some bones and a lead casket containing a medallion and an Italian sonnet. The sonnet recorded that these were the remains of the woman whom Petrarch had made famous. The King thereupon wrote another epitaph himself, in eight lines of French verse, added this to the medallion and the sonnet in the lead casket, and had the tomb re-sealed. According to a tradition in the Avignon country, which all the earlier genealogists accepted, Laura came of the Sade family, Paul being claimed as her father and Hugues the Elder her brother’ (Gilbert Lély, *The Marquis de Sade: A Definitive Biography* (New York: Grove Press, 1961), 11.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, 9.

suffer, come, this is the way/ Come to me, if you can see your way free.”<sup>88</sup> Schaeffer would make of this incestual longing and desire to take his ancient relative, Laure, from those other men who possessed her in life and in lyric something of a significant resonance:

Sade would make Laure his own muse. His drive to write, precisely like his feverish and often perverse sexuality, was bound together with a powerful need to compete with or attack whatever was forbidden, limited, sanctified.<sup>89</sup>

Here knowledge is seen anchored at its beginning to something born of dreams, appearing as a reverie. The wisdom of the art critic Heinrich Wölfflin, delivered in a later century, gives the pithy reminder that knowledge comes by way of neither a turning point (St-Martin) nor novelty (Voltaire):

The observation of nature is an empty notion as long as we do not know in what form the observation took place... It is true, we only see what we look for, but we only look for what we can see.<sup>90</sup>

And this, in a nutshell, is the very message Montaigne wanted to convey in his essay, “De la experiencia”. In the work Montaigne sets forth on his own journey of discovery from the very same position Rousseau would in both his *Confessions* and *Rêveries*: from the point of his own self and that knowledge he possessed. M.A. Screech reminds the reader of the particular cosmological orientation that would have informed Montaigne’s self:

[a]ll individual human beings (as the scholastic philosophers put it) bore in themselves the entire “form” of the human race. Not that all are identical, but all are inter-related by species.<sup>91</sup>

This is the sort of “negative” quality established in the introduction as saturating Sade’s oeuvre; and St-Martin is at her best when she exports ancient Italian science, handmaid to this scholastic tradition, as she does in her essay, “Sade’s System of Perversity and Italian Medicine” where she juxtaposes Galenic medical terms like “miasma” and “corruption” and Saint-Fond’s experimentations with “malevolent molecules”. However, the problem arrives for her when she gets entangled in the “negativity-positivity” of the vector she so incisively

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<sup>88</sup> Neil Schaeffer, op. cit., 4.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>90</sup> Heinrich Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History. The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art* (New York: Dover Publications, 1932), 230.

<sup>91</sup> M.A. Screech, ‘Introduction’, in *Michel de Montaigne: The Complete Essays* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), xvi.

adumbrates throughout her work. Had she relied on someone like Montaigne for an extension in degree of “negativity”, an extension very much appropriate to Sade’s scientific research, she could have been not so bound to the periodicity of Sade’s own writing. It is worth drawing out in full the justification of this assertion.

In *De la médecine chez Sade: Disséquer la vie, narrer la mort* St-Martin situates Sade in the fluid debate concerning the origin of life in eighteenth-century embryology. In her exegeses at those three critical theoretical junctions in the embryological debate: “animalculisme”, “ovisme” and “épigenèse”, St-Martin is careful to emphasize Sade’s engagement with all three; and refusal to choose a favorite:

Si Sade n’avait eu une compréhension étendue des phénomènes de la generation, il n’aurait jamais pu retourner si habilement à son profit ces discours; en effet, l’animalculisme est pressuré au point où il renvoie à la fois à l’amour et au meurtre de sa progéniture, l’ovisme permet de travailler scientifiquement la haine envers la mère et bien entendu la théorie du mélange des deux semences [épigenèse], même abordée de biais et diluée à des problèmes de l’hérédité que Sade n’a pas inventés, nourrit l’athéisme.<sup>92</sup>

This is in keeping with her method of holding Sade to his unique “negative” scientific method, of whose description no “positive” word can ever be spoken, i.e., the moment Sade chooses any one of these three options for explaining definitively the origin of life, the “negativity” immediately becomes something “positive”. It is due to this apparent equivocation that those in posterity, who pan Sade’s scientific contribution as risible and inconsistent, really misunderstand the purpose of his research and the principle of his method. Picking up on the point mentioned in the introduction concerning Le Mettrie missing the “negative” ground to Needman’s description of animalculae - Le Mettrie beholden to his penchant for facts derived from experimentation and observation - St-Martin offers an alternative for understanding La Mettrie’s science; she denigrates his approach in experimentation while redeeming him in his “fictions”. After describing La Mettrie’s flair for

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<sup>92</sup> Armelle St-Martin, *De la médecine chez Sade: Disséquer la vie, narrer la mort* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2010), 155.

seasoning his scientific texts with literature and even poetry for maximum polemical (and *dramatizing*) effects, St-Martin locates where his strength really lies:

[... u]n contemporain comme La Mettrie prouve à Sade que la science est loin d'être incompatible avec la fiction [...] la cas lamettrien signifie aussi qu'un fait positif transposé dans le lieu de la création est poreux aux influences subjectives et pulsionnelles.<sup>93</sup>

This partial critique of La Mettrie could apply to Sade for similar reasons and, though St-Martin does not say so explicitly, Sade himself was inundated by proportionalities of “positivity” by the very fact all three embryological positions he worked with presupposed gendered “positivities”: “male” sperm and “female” ova even without needing to choose from any one of the positions. This limited perspective becomes troublesome for St-Martin especially concerning “épigénèse”, which she argued would have been useful to Sade for the obsolescence sperm-ova “hérédité” obtruded upon the divinely created homunculi of preformationism. Sade certainly was not the kind of atheist to negate God and the nuance of his position was enough to even convince Klossowski in an inverse matter that Sade must on account of his reveries be a theist. Le Brun states her case against Klossowski's thesis in *Sade, Mon Prochain* where he claimed, in atheism's failure, Sade is led back to normative Christianity:

In this sense only [...] could Sade definitely be considered an “*insane man*” [...] “Beneath the mask of atheism”, writes Klossowski, as if to show us how deluded was the man who strove to rid himself and us of all illusions. And Klossowski succeeds, taking advantage of the deliberate absence of perspective in the Sadian world in order to impose a Christian perspective upon the bare horizon which Sade is desperately attempting to show us.<sup>94</sup>

Recourse to Montaigne brings Sade to a deeper degree of “negativity” that would not only forfeit the need to take from this “mélange des deux semences” a “God denying atheism” but also set up the location from where to undermine the claim for theism Klossowski advances.

This assertion will now be justified.

Screech gives a good account of the depth of Montaigne's “negativity”:

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 128-29.

<sup>94</sup> Annie Le Brun, *Sade: A Sudden Abyss* (San Francisco: City Light Books, 1990), 74. (Emphasis added)

[a]nd (more remarkably) Montaigne discovered that to think about women and their sexuality could also tell you much about men and vice versa, since men and women are cast in the same mould.<sup>95</sup>

And this view is far from exceptional in the conceptualization of gender in the Renaissance. Thomas Laqueur observes how, despite Renaissance anatomists' impeccable understanding of the inner mechanics of male and female genitalia, there was a preference to see the two systems rather as a morphological inversion of one another - the uterus, ovaries and vagina became inverse reflections of the scrotum, testes and penis, respectively.<sup>96</sup> By placing the cardinal significance on morphological similitude - and saying it is so despite the availability of "mechanics" - Laqueur almost anticipates the arrival of a "mechanical" alternative. Renaissance anatomists would only have to wait a little longer for Descartes to arrive on the scene and "mechanics", handiwork of skilled artisans, would become the basis for a new metaphysical norm. The embryological debate St-Martin engages concerning Sade is born of this "mechanical" tradition with the difference being that the "positivity" ends up much sharper, aimed more penetratingly at physical matter. Arguably Sade's "negativity" takes up an antecedent position, far enough back to even engage Montaigne and his own curious discourse of "ovisme". Citing Erasmus' *Adages*, Montaigne tells the story of a man from Delphi, who had a peculiar talent for telling eggs apart from distinguishing features and linking them to the brooding hen, to which each belonged.<sup>97</sup> Montaigne derives from this anecdote the deeper implication regarding particularities and generalities:

[...] unlikeness obtrudes into anything we make [...] Likeness does not make things 'one' as much as unlikeness makes them 'other' [...] Nature has bound herself to make nothing 'other' which is not unlike.<sup>98</sup>

He then goes on to articulate the problem "unlikeness" brings to legislators, judges, philosophers and theologians of his age, whose vocations depend on the "positivities" derived from the unlikenesses they see in the world:

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<sup>95</sup> M.A. Screech, op. cit., xvi.

<sup>96</sup> Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 89.

<sup>97</sup> Michel de Montaigne, 'On Experience', op. cit., 1207.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 1208.

The multiplicity of our human inventions will never attain to the diversity of our cases. Add a hundred times more: but never will it happen that even one of all the many thousands of cases which you have already isolated and codified will ever meet one future case to which it can be matched and compared so exactly that some detail or some other specific item does not require a specific judgment. There is hardly any relation between actions (which are perpetually changing) and fixed unchanging laws.<sup>99</sup>

As it was for Sade, Montaigne believed the overarching unifier was nature: “[n]ature always gives us happier laws than those we give ourselves”;<sup>100</sup> but, a pious, (monotheistic) Catholic, Montaigne held nature was the creation of the Christian God. And it is at this junction where Sade is far more relevant an atheist than the type St-Martin discusses in reference to “épigénèse”. D’Holbach was cited earlier describing monotheism: “‘leisurely’ metaphysicians and theologians as ‘subtilly’ partitioning off ‘nature from herself’ and from nature’s ‘energy’ creating an ‘incomprehensible being’” (p. 23). It is from the transition from polytheism to theism where Iwan Bloch in his 1899 work, *Marquis de Sade: His Life and Work* elucidates a polytheistic “negativity” breaching the monotheistic veneer, the kind Klossowski is so adamant to uphold. Bloch recaps that same evolution from “idolatry” to “metaphysics” d’Holbach traced earlier, but inserts the figure of Satan less a monotheistic opposite to God, i.e., Satan being substantially “positive”; and more the encapsulation of the whole of the polytheistic spirit threatening the monotheistic one. Bloch states:

[t]he height of religious sexual mysticism was reached in the so-called “Satan’s Church”. Satan here become the “Personification of the Physical Mysterium of Copulation” as protest against the exclusive mastery of “Metaphysical Mysticism of Idolatry” [...] Satan-Satyr, Satan-Pan, and Satan-Phallus was the ancient God of instincts and corporeal passions, equality honored by the highest and lowest in spirit, inexhaustible source of joy in life, enthusiasm and intoxication.<sup>101</sup>

Bloch supports this assertion by describing the plethora of defiled sacred objects; utterances of extreme blasphemy and even narrations of Black Masses, citing even one example in *Juliette*.<sup>102</sup> Le Brun would years later confirm Bloch’s line of inquiry in her notion of “vital atheism”:

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 1208-09.

<sup>101</sup> Iwan Bloch, *Marquis de Sade: His Life and Work* (New York: Superver 32C Inc., 2002), 17-18.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 22. \* “[t]wo black masses were read in the privates of two tribades [...] then the Host was placed in the dung, after which the altar became the place of the wildest orgies [...] Pope Pius VI himself read a black mass at St. Peter’s church the Host being placed in the anus of a young girl”. (Full quotation)



[only Sade] was capable of canceling this crisis of representation concerned only with representing the crisis [... only he] could preserve us from the deception of a thought originally designed for unmasking, but which had subsequently turned in an ideology of remasking.<sup>103</sup>

The reach of Sade's "negativity" arguably recedes even further behind the lines of polytheism and into the natural world but for now it suffices to say that in unraveling "negativity" in reverse in the abbreviated historical survey just presented, Sade is speaking to much more than just the theoretical concerns of the science of this age; he is also engaging with its history and adumbrating the evanescent object of science that moves throughout. The story of an egg has been shown to have a long history in the history of Western science (and will be a reoccurring theme in this dissertation) but it is only in these pagan rites where concern for its origin is most "negative" - in the act of copulation. St-Martin - along with the vector she adumbrates - deserves credit for at least cracking open this line of inquiry concerning objects, ones imbued with different proportionalities of "negativity" and "positivity".

### 1.3 Rousseau and the Mechanism of Object Formation in his Science of "Sensibilité"

The question of "objects" plays an important role in Rousseau's science of *sensibilité*. But as a scientific method St-Martin sees the scope of *sensibilité* covering only diverse ranges of locations:

[r]appelons que la sensibilité est un concept qui dépasse le cadre de la médecine, car on la retrouve aussi bien en esthétique qu'en philosophie.<sup>104</sup>

Not content to base this claim on her own insight St-Martin cites a familiar source, one used earlier to subtly draw out that critique of d'Alembert's blind faith in "positive" knowledge in Diderot's *d'Alembert's Dream*: Théophile de Bordeu:

Ainsi, l'animal est un vaste réseau sensible [... c]'est sous ce point de vue general qu'il semble qu'on doive suivre les fonctions de la vie, qui se tiennent les unes aux autres d'une manière admirable, et qui dependent toutes de l'influence ou de l'action de la fibre animal ou *sensible, diversement repliée, contournée, appuyée, excitée dans les diverses parties*.<sup>105</sup>

In the introduction it was stated that it was not the range of locations that was the problem for *sensibilité* but its diversity of meaning including that one inappropriate pairing: the

<sup>103</sup> Annie Le Brun, op. cit., 212.

<sup>104</sup> Armelle St-Martin, op. cit., 167.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. (Emphasis added)

contradiction, seen in Vila and Riskin's respective "celebrations" and "renunciations" of "facts". If statements: "A object is B object" and "A object is not B object" are mutually exclusive, according to Aristotle's Law of Non-contradiction, with presentations of "objects" now containing different proportions of "negativity" and "positivity", "facts" really become choices of orientation in either one of these two directions. It is in this way that the apparent contradiction emerging in Vila and Riskin's use of "facts" finds some resolution. Rousseau's notion of "morale sensitive" has already been introduced amidst this confusion and it is to its clarification that this section now turns.

If the previous section was interested in offering a historical survey of the "object" of scientific inquiry, this section will consider the mechanism of this "object's" production. It will also set up the preliminaries to develop Sade's unique treatment of this mechanism, who in overwhelming Rousseau, ultimately manages to alter the constitution of this mechanism with interesting ramifications for science. (This alteration will be shown as Sade's transmutation of Rousseau's virtue into vice but the specifics will be taken up later.) Riskin's handling of *sensibilité* will be shown to be more useful towards this end than Vila's. Vila does well presenting *sensibilité*'s pathological tendencies when unhinged in individuals but presents it in a much more limited scope compared with Riskin, who sees the wider historical potential for *sensibilité* to produce social "pathos", "pathos" defined here as "suffering", using the older definition of the word.<sup>106</sup> In a footnote concerning the attribution of blame for the spasms of violence produced by the French Revolution, Riskin clears up a misconception concerning "culprit" Rousseau that mistakenly put him on the side of a Burkean argument,<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> The more common usage of 'pathos' today reads more like "pity".

<sup>107</sup> Burke's position is similar to that 'spirit of the system' critique of old, that one used in attacks on dogmatic answers to questions of human concern, especially surrounding the heated theological debates involved in religious schisms. Later this criticism extended to attacks on the Cartesians and their 'mechanical' methods.

asserting reductive sciences engender political absolutism and the subsequent violence of the Revolution:<sup>108</sup>

While [Francois] Furet attributed the absolutism of social unity in Rousseau's ideal polity to his "atomization" of the social world, [Jean] Starobinski emphasized instead Rousseau's rejection of atomic reduction. Rousseau, according to Starobinski invoked the "immediate union" of fluid [in a crystal], whose absolute oneness was measured by their transparency, as a better model than pulverized crystal [in mirror], the inferiority of whose inner unity was revealed by its opacity.<sup>109</sup>

The subtle attention paid here to the respective materialities of *crystals* and *mirrors* is important as it preserves not only the "negative" space intended for relations, i.e., Starobinski's *unions* of *crystals*; but also those "positive" aggregates that form "object" *mirrors*. And what are these "positive objects" then? They are mirrors, comprised of *pulverized* pieces that have flaked off of reductive sciences. These pieces - in atomized states - combine to create *opaque* objects but ones that project back like a *mirror*. These *mirrors* present the "organizers" of these "objects" beholden to their own reflections as "doubles" just as Foucault would have it in his discussion of the emergence of Modern science.<sup>110</sup> This "crystal" will be in fact an important feature in this dissertation; its contrast with the "mirror" will be fully clarified in Chapter 6.1. But for now the question of reveries once again figures importantly as both the manner and substance of Rousseau's presentation of "morale sensitive" are held under their sway despite the basis of the argumentation, being stated as materialistic. How this is so needs explaining. Also, it is easier to assess reveries' affect in Sade's work by first making Rousseau the starting point.

The tumultuous relations Rousseau maintained with many amongst the members of the literary coterie in Paris, centered on his relationship with the character, Baron von Grimm, who could be taken as the chief antagonist in *Les Confessions*. The conflict between the two men that would dominate the work from "Livre VIII: 1750-1752" onward really begins with a "reverie" and a very peculiar transformation. At about the time Rousseau had finally made a

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<sup>108</sup> Jessica Riskin, op. cit., 279.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> See Chapter 9, 'Man and His Double' in *The Order of Things* for a more detailed account.

name for himself with the success of his opera, *The Village Soothsayer*, Grimm, a neophyte to the Paris scene and beneficiary of his association with Rousseau, had a morbid spell of melancholy caused by unrequited love, one so strong he was incapacitated for a period. Rousseau, along with a friend Abbé Rayal, had to help nurse him back to health, and back to his senses. Strangely enough, it was this episode that propelled Grimm to fame. Rousseau explains how Grimm tried in vain to woo Marie Fel, lady of fellow Encyclopèdiste Louis de Cahusac:

This incident did not fail to make a stir, and it really would have been a marvelous story if an opera girl's hard-heartedness had caused a man to die of despair. This magnificent passion made Grimm fashionable; so he was considered a prodigy of love, friendship, and devotion of every sort. This reputation caused him to be sought after and fêted in high society, and so took him far from me, who had never been anything but a makeshift. I saw that he was on the point of deserting me altogether [...].<sup>111</sup>

Making a trifle out of such a display, one treacherous towards de Cahusac, would be the guiding repulsion that set Rousseau on his course to sketch out the topography of his works *Émile*, *La nouvelle Héloïse* and the *Contrat social*. Grimm's story of unrequited love demonstrates well how it is possible that something substantively "positive" can emerge from as "negative" a phenomenon as a "reverie". To Grimm's "love-sickness", i.e., a physiological reaction to the obstruction of a physical yearning, was superadded a quality of theatricity, whose performative value takes on the status of something advantageous and singular, a "positive object". Rousseau worried about the threat such artificiality posed to the integrity of the human body and "soul" and fretted about the very possibility that nature itself could be supplanted in the manner the hapless Cahusac was by Grimm and those spectators, who lionized his display of apparent "sublime" love. In response Rousseau developed his "materialist" system, "morale sensitive", to promote natural remedies for health and well-being - or to use Vila's expression, to promote "moral hygiene". As stated earlier the aim of this section is to lay out the mechanisms of the two systems Grimm and Rousseau both present in this curious anecdote. However, the two systems have ready-made designations

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<sup>111</sup> Jean-Jacque Rousseau, *The Confessions*, op. cit., 345.

and, though not yet stated, will ground discussions from now on in real historical categories: the “negative” school of the “Physiocrats”; and the “positive” school of the “Ideologues”.

In the epilogue to *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* Jonathan I. Israel, determined to present a united front between Spinoza and Rousseau concerning a shared perspective on nature, finds the link in Rousseau’s educational program for Émile. Though satisfied with only very low degrees of corroboration in both systems and generally far too enthusiastic to see Spinoza’s shadow over every aspect of the Enlightenment canon, Israel does see the monistic reach of Rousseau’s views on education, which, for our purposes, telescopes nicely Rousseau and Grimm’s respective involvements in the “Marie Fel Affair” into the conditions informing Rousseau’s pedagogical choices for Émile:

Émile grows into a youth who represents Rousseau’s social ideals of the ‘natural man’ whose life is based on the authentic needs and aspirations of men and who lack the frivolity, vices, empty courtesy, addiction to fashion and desire to flatter usual in society. He is a model of honesty, plain dealing and self-reliance.<sup>112</sup>

The choices, Rousseau presents here, also correspond with contrasting assumptions and practices of once again that more general theoretical pairing of the time: the Physiocrats and Ideologues. Foucault is one intellectual with sufficient discernment to recognize in each of these schools more than just opposing “positive” and “negative” trajectories; he also intuits in their hazy midst some shared inception. He brings the two almost to the point of convergence in an analogy from the plastic arts:

[a]ll that is perceived positively and, as it were, in *relief*, in one of these two interpretations is perceived negatively, like a *cast* of the first, in the other.<sup>113</sup>

His “General Tables”<sup>114</sup> capture the vagaries of this interplay but the pedagogical tenets Rousseau develops for Émile have a kind of “plain dealing” that strips down the “fashionable” complexity of even Foucault’s own analysis. Rousseau also developed his “materialist”

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<sup>112</sup> Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 718.

<sup>113</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 217. (Emphasis added)

<sup>114</sup> See p. 219 for these ‘General Tables’ of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century.

system of moral hygiene aware of the same dueling concerns about formulation as many of his contemporaries did including theorists like the Physiocrat Quesnay and the Ideologue Condillac. The Physiocrats backstopped wealth at nature, in Foucault's words:

[...] agriculture [but any primary resource industry, e.g., fish stocks for a coastal city] is a manufacturing of divine institution in which the manufacturer has as his partner the Author of nature, the Producer of all goods and all wealth.<sup>115</sup>

It follows from this that wealth and its proper distribution within a judiciously calibrated economic system depended on certain actor profiles, whose qualities were actually subjects in Émile's own inculcation: "honesty":

[...] the creation of value is therefore not a means of satisfying a greater number of needs; it is the sacrifice of a certain quantity of goods in order to exchange others;<sup>116</sup>

"plain dealing":

[...] it is not the trade that has produced the superfluity of goods [even when hauled from afar], the excess must already have existed in order for trade to be possible;<sup>117</sup>

and "self-reliance":

[...] ground rents must capture the "net product" of a lived area: "remuneration for all [...] work" and consumption of what is produced, so that conditions are set for all individuals to engage in commerce and trade on equal footing.<sup>118</sup>

Foucault's "economisms" aside, the underlying impetus in this model is *sensibilité*; its "negativity" is established strictly on the basis of relations. And as for the alternative character profiles: "frivol", "fashion" and "flattery" of the educational programs Rousseau resisted - qualities Grimm came to embody in *Les Confessions* - Foucault gives a satisfactory summation in his section "Utility" when he described how Ideologues saw value emerging from conditions "unstable": "[...] modifiable with men's [relative and changing] appetites, desires and needs";<sup>119</sup> "unequal":

[...] despite the fact that each element traded has an intrinsic value - more value is acquired than was originally possessed [... i]nstead of two immediate utilities, one has two others which are considered to satisfy larger needs;

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid, 211.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 209.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 210.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, 212.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 214.

and “ungrounded”:

[...] all these positive elements which constitute value are based upon a certain state of need present in men, and therefore upon the finite character of nature’s fecundity.<sup>120</sup>

Foucault called the mechanism of this value: “articulation of exchange”; and it is not a great leap to see an ambitious sycophant like Grimm striving to express himself in a manner just as “articulate”. His spell of love-sickness, the streams of amorous sonnets flowing from languid, semi-conscious lips constitute a further manner of this “articulation”, one of a popular (love) trope, winning Grimm admission into the Parisian salon. But an economic explanation for “articulation of exchange” actually offers the widest possible perspective for how “positive objects” are produced. In *Wealth of Nations* Smith notably assigns erudition its own “divisions of labour”<sup>121</sup> and fashion, by this same logic, deserves a designation of its own amongst a certain class of people. Smith offers here the purest yet broadest description of what constitutes “positive objects” and how they are produced:

Men are much more likely to discover easier and readier methods of attaining any object when the whole attention of their minds is directed towards a single object than when it is dissipated among a variety of things. But, in consequence of the division of labour the whole of every man’s attention comes naturally to be directed towards some one very simple object. It is naturally to be expected, therefore, that some one or other of those who are employed in each particular branch of labour should soon find out easier and readier methods of performing their own particular work, whenever the nature of it admits of such improvement.<sup>122</sup>

Rousseau developed his educational program to counter the world of Smith’s trenchant description and if Émile was Rousseau’s apprentice; Julie would be his master and queen.

Five or so years after the “Marie Fel Affair” Rousseau set in motion his final retreat from Parisian high society and it came with a decisiveness that surprised even those with whom he was parting company: he left for the Hermitage “not wait[ing] for the return of the fine weather” and did so “with loud derision” from the d’Holbach circle who expected him to

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 217.

<sup>121</sup> Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University, 2005), 15. \* ‘[P]hilosophers and men of speculation [...] are often capable of combining together the powers of the most distant and dissimilar objects in the progress of society, philosophy or speculation becomes, like every other employment, the principal or sole trade and occupation [...]’ (Full quotation)

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

“return with his tail between his legs” after only “three months of solitude”.<sup>123</sup> Vila linked Rousseau’s “return to nature” as part of a greater trend amongst some Physiocrats, who felt hampered by economic arguments that neglected to tackle “hygienic” concerns; she highlights Tissot in particular:

[he] argues in favour of correcting the current social conditions that have led to a concentration of wealth, bodies, and moral/cultural authority in the cities, while the countryside has been depopulated and devalored. Tissot, however, gives a peculiarly medical twist to the Physiocratic “back to the country” campaign: placing hygiene before economics, he argues that the necessary first step in social reform is to improve health of society’s most exclusive, and most denatured, branch.<sup>124</sup>

“Going back to the country” was no abstract argument for Rousseau though. His return to the Hermitage was an attempt to capture a spirit he had left behind in 1742 when he first left for Paris to pursue his music career; it was the spirit of his transient years when he lived with his “Mama”, Madame de Warens, in her country cottage in Les Charmettes, Chambéry. The hygienic programme he had hoped to develop in his *Morale sensitive, ou Le Matérialisme du sage* (a book that was never written, however) had its inception in this period and the role his “Mama” played in the program really is a defining feature though one passed over in Vila’s analysis. (The role “Mama” played in Rousseau’s system will be the subject of the next section.) But for now the way Vila discusses the hygienic programmes of Tissot and Rousseau raises interesting comparisons. For Tissot, she described him as being as interested in curbing the ebullience of “mental faculties”<sup>125</sup> as he was the superfluous expenditures of sperm in masturbation as stated in his *L’onanisme. Dissertation sur les maladies produites par la masturbation*. Rustic health discouraged excess of all kinds and, in Vila’s words, was “insensible” in the manner of a hardy peasant:

[he is] so naturally impassive or insensible that ‘the loss of the people dearest to him hardly touches him at all; the loss of his worldly goods does not affect much more.’<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Confessions*, op. cit., 374.

<sup>124</sup> Anne C. Vila, op. cit., 189.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, 194.



For Rousseau, Vila presents him as anything but “insensible”. The hygienic problem he sets up for Julie and delivers through the “insensible” Wolmar, Julie’s husband, from the beginning of Part Two of *La nouvelle Héloïse*, is only as successful as it gives allowances for Julie’s *sensibilité* to pulsate freely through all the micro-channels of this highly managed community of Clarnes. A pulsation that happens to also be the anodyne for Julie’s former “still heartbroken” lover from Part One, Saint-Preux, though one prescribed with the clinical touch of Wolmar. In what Vila’s calls his “image replacement” therapy Wolmar takes those two “objects”: the “fatal spot” where the former lovers first fell into passion and the “kiss”, the fateful precipice, and remakes them into something promoting the hygiene of the whole community:

[Wolmar] executes a new kiss between the old lovers in the grove with the express intent of [...] replacing [these two objects: the “grove” and the “kiss”] with a new, calm, innocuous association.<sup>127</sup>

But herein lies the apparent contradiction in the mechanism of Rousseau’s materialist system that he intended to publish in the *Morale sensitive, ou Le Matérialisme du sage*. Wolmar embodies this peasant wisdom that came in from behind Julie to stabilize her *sensibilité* and, *ipso facto*, make her the centre and beginning of life for her community. If Julie be the *fons et arigo* of life in Clarnes, how does it follow that it is impassive objects, embodied by this “folksy” Wolmar, that are the true sources? This apparent contradiction is also on display in the regime of “austerity”<sup>128</sup> Wolmar established for Julie:

[Julie] was formed to know and taste every pleasure [...] is able to enjoy that supreme pleasure peacefully [...] such that the art of enjoyment [l’art de jouir] is for her an art of privation.<sup>129</sup>

With a “negative-positive” scale in place, one situated within a greater “posteriority-anteriority-interiority” complex, it is now possible to see a scaled *sensibilité* rather than a dichotomous choice between either “sensible” or “insensible”. The “objects” of Rousseau’s materialism are highly “negative” and are contained in relations of high tropism,

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid, 218-19.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid, 212.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

characteristic of the “anterior phase” as outlined in the introduction. Even the directness of those character profiles: “honesty”, “plain-dealing” and “self-reliance” developed in Émile’s educational programme and the Physiocrats’ own economic policy confirm a like “tropism”. These objects contrast with the much more “positive” ones of Grimm and Smith’s presentation and their formations will be the focus of Chapter 3.1 when “anteriority” begins to shift in the direction of “interiority”. The cornucopian description Rousseau gives of the canopy Wolmar provides for Julie is both Émile, in full manhood, and the full implementation of the Physiocrats’ land reform:

Our table is furnished with nothing but viands of our own growth, our dress and furniture are almost all composed of the manufactures of the country: nothing is despised with us because it is common, nor held in esteem because it is scarce. As every thing that comes from abroad is liable to be disguised, or adulterated, we confine ourselves, as much through nicety as moderation, to the choice of the best home-commodities, the quality of which is never suspect. Our meals are plain, but choice; and nothing is wanting to make ours a sumptuous table, but the transporting it a hundred leagues off; in which case ever thing would be delicate, every thing would be rare, and even our trouts of the lake would be thought infinitely better, were they to be eaten at Paris.<sup>130</sup>

The objects of Rousseau’s materialism, developed in his concept of “morale sensitive”, have their origin in this Clarens micro-economy but more profoundly in Rousseau’s time at Chambéry estates. Despite being saturated in a “negative” backdrop, “objects” for Rousseau and the Physiocrats still end up with their own high dosage of “positivity” and henceforth are even substantively comparable in some ways to those formed by the mechanism laid out earlier by Smith (p. 49); and embraced by the Ideologues. And how is this so? Rousseau and the Physiocrats’ choices have a latent “positivity”, recalling d’Holbach’s earlier words to the effect: what is either “congenial” or “inimical” to “man” (p. 23). These are clearly not the conclusions Sade would arrive at even though the ground of his exploration is much closer to Rousseau and the Physiocrats than say Smith and the Ideologues.

#### **1.4 Towards the Plenum of a New Immateriality: Rousseau and Residue from Chambéry Estates**

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid, 213.

It was suggested early on in this chapter that Rousseau's posture in *Confessions vis-à-vis* his audience was one of increasing convergence. With his materialism explained, it is now not too difficult to imagine how it is that by the time Rousseau wrote *Dialogues, ou Rousseau Juge de Jean-Jacques* (1772-76) he had attained in his authorial positionality full synonymy with this audience. In this work Rousseau really takes on the identity of Julie in *La nouvelle Héloïse* as if he had vicariously learned in full the lessons of Wolmar and could now be the horizon for the universes of all his readers, just like its "General Will" laid out in his *Contrat Social*. In the eponymously titled section of the "Troisième Dialogue" Rousseau presents himself and "the People" as one and the same:

Voilà ce qu'il n'a point cru, je vous assure. Il a dû s'attendre aux cruelles vengeance de tous ceux qu'offensent la vérité, & il s'y est attend. Il savoit que les Grands, les Viseurs, les Robins, les Financiers, les Médecins, les Prêtres, les Philosophes & tous les gens de parti qui sont de la société un vrai brigandage [...] Si cet homme ne fût point né, J.J., malgré l'audace de ses censures eût vécu dans l'infortune & dans la gloire, & les maux don't on n'eût pas manqué de l'accabler [...] c'est une justice que J.J. aime encore à rendre à la nation qui s'empresse à le couvrir d'opprobres.<sup>131</sup>

Given the intricacy of his materialism, a statement like this is more than just political grandstanding of a megalomaniacal "proto-revolutionary" that some have made him out to be. Rather it works on a particular self-positioning built on a structure, stemming first from Émile's education then the system of Clarnes estates and finally, and more fundamentally, the person of Madame de Warens in her country cottage in Chambéry. One of the distinctions Israel made concerning Rousseau's monism is that unlike Spinoza's Rousseau maintained two substances: a material and an immaterial. In Rousseau's words (through Israel):

'Matter in motion according to fixed laws,' [...] 'point me to an intelligence' and also 'some common end which I cannot perceive': 'I believe therefore that the world is governed by a wise and powerful will.'<sup>132</sup>

This section will explore this usage of "immateriality" with the impertinent hope of draining it of the mechanical imprint it bears in being the materialist "other" of Cartesian dualism and recruit the term for a new expressiveness, exploiting its inherent grammatical resistance to

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<sup>131</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Rousseau, Juge de Jean-Jacques: Dialogues* (digitized version) (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2010), 207.

<sup>132</sup> Jonathan I. Israel, op. cit., 719.

materialism, whose dismantling of course is one of the challenges this dissertation has set for itself. Just as important is the maintenance of that self-referentiality holding Rousseau to his notion of “General Will”, characteristic of the period of his *Dialogues*. Montaigne from his antecedent position will have a supporting role in all of this but ultimately the aim is to have a structure in place well suited for Sade to arrive with his own manner of extension.

A peculiar feature of Rousseau’s *contrat social* is its departure from most theoretical starting points that seek to explain authentic social organizations from positions of proximity. Hobbes is one of the first to begin this way when he conceived of equality in the human domain as a generality of “self-regards”:

For such is the nature of men that howsoever they may acknowledge many others to be more witty, or more eloquent or more learned, yet they will hardly believe there be many so wise as themselves; for they see their own wit at hand, and other men's *at a distance*. But this proveth rather that men are in that point equal, than unequal.<sup>133</sup>

In the opening to the first part of *Leviathan* Hobbes offers up a mechanic’s guide to what constitutes humanity from biology all the way up to society, and although Hobbes describes the formative basis as built “at a distance”, this distance is one that barricades objects in the similar proximity Boyle places “corpuscles” that fill out all scales of phenomena:

For seeing life is but a motion of limbs, the beginning whereof is in some principal part within, why may we not say that all automata (engines that move themselves by springs and wheels as doth a watch) have an artificial life? For what is the heart, but a spring; and the nerves, but so many strings; and the joints, but so many wheels, giving motion to the whole body, such as was intended by the Artificer? Art goes yet further, imitating that rational and most excellent work of Nature, man. For by art is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMONWEALTH, or STATE (in Latin, CIVITAS), which is but an artificial man, though of greater stature [...]<sup>134</sup>

In the middle of the next century the moral philosopher, David Hume, in *A Treatise of Human Nature*, shifted from Hobbes’ mechanical emphasis (and the impotence mechanical reductionism entailed) and introduced social organizations guided by “passions”, something coming to the core of this dissertation’s position. Hume proposed a two-tier system of human sentiment, one built of two seemingly contradictory trajectories: the imagination tending to

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 107. (Emphasis added)

<sup>134</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Eugene: University of Oregon, 1999), 1-2.

bypass comparisons in closest proximity and particularity, reaching instead towards those more distant and general; and the passions, which respond “livelier” to objects closer than those ones more distant. Comparisons, according to Hume, engendered social artifice and inauthenticity while “passions” were authentic, though they never seemed to touch down on any bedrock of consciousness; in this way they appear “relational”, in the orbit of “negativity”. Hume summarized the inauthenticity of comparison in this analogy:

When we love the father or master of a family, we think little of his children or servants. But when these are present with us, or when it lies any ways in our power to serve them, the nearness and contiguity in this case increases their magnitude, or at least removes that opposition, which fancy makes the transition of the affections.<sup>135</sup>

The comparisons of Hume’s concern are social expectations and mores, mobile and receding further and further into greater generalities representable in those material and conceptual objects comprising all social structures be they economic, political or religious. The manner, in which these comparisons mold human conduct and intentionality, gives them a use-value that cannot be too dissimilar from how “division of labor” improved pins in Smith’s “pin factory”: a new manner of accommodation of the “master’s” children or a new courtesy given his wife are sure to pay dividends of a much more “negative” currency. Rousseau builds his “General Will” out of passion occupying the distal space Hume actually reserves for “comparisons”:

Each of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will, and, in our corporate capacity, we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole.<sup>136</sup>

Again, what is inverted here is how Hume had built passion out of proximity to individual subjectivity. In that telling example from his *Treatise* where a passer-by on the seashore bears witness to a sinking ship and feels “sympathy” for the suffering, proximity is presented as outpacing distal comparisons.<sup>137</sup> The extent of Rousseau’s inversion of Hume’s scheme is

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<sup>135</sup> David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (London: Penguin Books, 1985), 395.

<sup>136</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (Some Texts from Early Modern Philosophy, [www.earlymoderntexts.com](http://www.earlymoderntexts.com), all rights reserved to Jonathon Bennett, 2010-2015), 7.

<sup>137</sup> ‘Suppose the ship to be driven so near me, that I can perceive distinctly the horror, painted on the countenance of the seamen and passengers, hear their lamentable cries, see the dearest friends give their adieu,

apparent when comparing the grammatical subtleties of those philosophical expressions used in Rousseau's *Dialogues*: "amour de soi-même" and "amour propre". Whereas "love of one-self" is built on a natural distance of "love" being adjectively modified by the conjunctive phrase "of the reflexive (any) 'third-person singular'", "love" in "amour propre" is possessed solely by whomever the "own" is modifying. Citing Rousseau, Vila confirms this definitional nuance but also elucidates the respective emanations and terminations both forms end up becoming:

*Amour de soi-même* [...] is an instinctive urge to 'extend one's being and one's enjoyment'; *amour propre*, by contrast, a 'desire generated' mode of self-love that prompts humans to reflect and compare themselves constantly with their fellows.<sup>138</sup>

"Amour de soi-même", along with what can only be related to "General Will", possesses what will be shown to be a "plenum" shape. As the "plenum" will have an important role in developing the metaphysics of both Rousseau and Sade, conceptualizing it out of themes already developed in this dissertation is the best way to justify its use.

In the history of cosmology the "plenum" connotes a "negative" space - not that kind opened up by Newton in this presentation of the "vacuum" - rather it was much closer to something like pure motion. Descartes conceptualises space as what can only ever be jam packed with total matter, the perception of space being only what is perceived as the relative position of this matter at differing intervals of motion. Descartes accounts for this discrepancy of space, by first introducing "internal" place, which he calls the location of "vulgar" motion, vulgar in that motion is only considered for changes in an object's position vis-à-vis proximal "objects" surrounding it. He then presents "external place" as surfaces of proximal bundles of objects, which are necessarily more distant, given the sense of what is

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or embrace with a resolution to perish in each other's arms: No man has so savage a heart as to reap any pleasure from such a spectacle [...] 'Tis' evident, therefore, there is a medium in this cause; and that if the idea be too feint, it has no influence by comparison; and on the other hand, if it be too strong, it operates on us entirely by sympathy, which is contrary to comparison. Sympathy being the conversion of an idea into an impression, demands a greater force and vivacity in the idea than is requisite to comparison' (David Hume, op. cit., 645). (Full quotation)

<sup>138</sup> Anne C. Vila, op. cit., 184-85.

proximal is closer to something approaching restfulness. Descartes uses an analogy of a man sitting on a moving ship to explain his point:

[...] a man sitting on a ship that is leaving port thinks he is moving relative to the shore which he regards as fixed; but he doesn't think of himself as moving relative to the ship, because his relations to its parts remain unchanged. We ordinarily think of motion as involving action, and of rest as the stopping of action, and by that standard the man sitting on deck is more properly said to be at rest than in motion because he isn't aware of any action in himself.<sup>139</sup>

Descartes' plenum is presented as relational, built with similar concerns for "proximity" and "distality" already highlighted in this dissertation. In his emphasis on relations, Descartes is able to reject the notion that matter has indivisible (and proximal) end points as was suggested by many from the Corpuscularian School of his time (atomism). In a similar way, he is doing something much different than Newton, who believed space not to be a substance like matter was (or even necessarily filled with matter) but an entity in its own right, one he believed his calculus could detect. Devoid of matter in this way, metaphysics could thus do away with concerns for relations. In these ways, Newton takes up an opposing position to Descartes that will be important when considering Rousseau and Sade's metaphysics. However, there are two positions in Descartes' erudition that problematize the proximity-distality scale he so incisively suggests. These are vortices and the notion of the non-extended soul. The distance Descartes pursued had a directional dimension, the plenum was astrophysical, and it had as its source those swirling vortices, whose centrifugal forces carry the whole of the universe along its circular belts. Just as it was with the man motionless on a moving ship yet moving relative the passing shoreline so too was it for the world, in Descartes words:

The Earth, properly speaking, is not moved, nor are any of the Planets; although they are carried along by the heaven.<sup>140</sup>

The directionality and quality vortices had in being something somewhere depletes it of its quality of "negativity", making them necessarily "positive" and consequently proximal as

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<sup>139</sup> René Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, all right reserved, Jonathon Bennett, 2010-2015, based on Cambridge University Press publication translated by John Cottingham, 29.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid, 46.

even Alpha Centari is proximal to the astrophysicist who can describe it, explore it and locate it on a map. In a similar way, the non-extended soul too confronts a similar problem: it is immaterial yet it belongs to someone. Nothing could be more proximal and less relational than that. The plenum for Rousseau and Sade works very differently. It is neither somewhere nor something with this or that quality; it is absolute relationality. Although Descartes charts a useful course in his exploration of “negativity”, the manner of motion he describes is outside the purview of what will be seen as “negative” in this paper. The “plenum” of our concern has already been adumbrated in the curious manner Rousseau places Julie within Clarens estates and it is to this positioning we now return.

The source of Claren’s upheaval in the first half of the book, Julie would take on an inverse role in the latter half as its radiating source of energy and health as if she were the queen of a beehive. When she is agitated the whole hive comes to tumult; when she is mollified it returns to order again. Fittingly, Vila called Julie the “queen bee of Clarens”.<sup>141</sup> Another way of considering the “plenum’s” “negative” orientation is to turn to another famous beehive, that one in *D’Almbert’s Dream*. Diderot took too astute notice of the vagaries of beehives and like Rousseau intuited a reactivity of deep-seated eroticism. However, Diderot set his gaze first upon individual worker bees and worked his way up to an organizing logic, i.e., the queen. This pattern of starting from the smallest entities and working up towards an aggregate of organizational coherence is still a highly fashionable approach in modern scientific discourse especially in theories of evolution, e.g., Darwin’s 1859 *On the Origin of Species* or Dawkins’ 1976 *The Selfish Gene*. Here Diderot reflects on the simple rules of attraction and repulsion of rudimentary entities; and perceives therefrom an incremental logic and order:

[...] he’ll tell you that the second bee would pinch the one next to it, that in the entire cluster there would be as many sensations aroused as there are small animals, that everything will get aroused, shift itself, change position

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<sup>141</sup> Anne C. Vila, op. cit., 210.



and shape, that a noise will arise, small cries, and that someone who had never seen a group like that arrange itself would be tempted to assume it was an animal with five or six hundred heads [...]<sup>142</sup>

Such an order of articulation confirms Israel's manner of distinguishing Rousseau's interpretation of "volonté générale" from another version, Diderot's.<sup>143</sup> He contends Rousseau had

[...] a far more developed conception [...] only [...] realiz[able] in the context of civil society, under the State, not in the state of nature.<sup>144</sup>

As for Diderot it was the case that "General Will" emerged almost as an exceptional occurrence in a phenomenon otherwise general as Israel cites Diderot saying in his article in the *Encyclopédie*, "Droit naturel": "the individual is always driven to seek only his own welfare so that inevitably "les volonté particulières sont suspectes".<sup>145</sup> Admittedly a radical claim, starting any metaphysical system from such "particularities" is *ad initio* an "object" beginning and ultimately leads to a mechanistic explanation; and, for this reason, Rousseau's approach is unique and a "negative" answer to a tradition that has followed in the wake of Hobbes' position. In her consideration of Julie, the "Queen bee", Vila intimates with what Rousseau filled the "plenum" he developed. And since it was not a "vacuum", it had to have some kind of content:

Julie must stay strong and virtuous and healthy; if she were to falter, morally or physically, the network of positive sensibility that holds her community together might well fall into disarray.<sup>146</sup>

Here Vila recognizes the importance of "virtue" in Rousseau's monism. "Virtue" is what fills his "plenum".

The monistic vision Rousseau develops for "virtue" comes by way of a line of argumentation more often than not mistaken as one of the first forays into anthropological/sociological speculation. In his *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité* Rousseau talks a lot about origins, especially of language, of "civil society" but as just demonstrated origins for him do

<sup>142</sup> Denis Diderot, *D'Alembert's Dream* (Saint Mary's College of California, [www.stmarys-ca.edu/library/subject-guides/integral-c-e](http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/library/subject-guides/integral-c-e), scanned and edited by James Pepe and Michael A. Fitzpatrick), 4.

<sup>143</sup> Israel argues that Spinoza's 'dictamen of the 'common good' is comparable to Diderot's 'volonté générale'

<sup>144</sup> Benjamin I. Israel, op. cit., 720

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Anne C. Vila, op. cit., 211. (Emphasis added)

not have that “bottom-up” meaning that tends towards “positive” beginnings (like Diderot’s beehives). Meaning comes to him rather in gradations receding towards deeper “negativity”. Take the following quotation regarding “virtue” for instance and see how it need not necessarily be read as an anthropological beginning but rather a decline into a deeper aspect of nature:

It would seem at first glance that men in the state of nature, having no kind of moral relationships between them, or any known duties could be neither good nor evil, and that they could have neither vice nor virtue in the individual those characteristics which might be injurious to his own preservation and ‘virtue’ those which might contribute to it, in which case we should have to call the man who least resists the impulse of nature the most virtuous.<sup>147</sup>

Though Rousseau conceded Hobbes’ point that humankind had a claim to the things he needs, Rousseau scolded him for giving them over to passionate imaginings that aim for sole proprietorship of the universe.<sup>148</sup> Rousseau wrote *Discours* in 1755 about seventeen years before his *Dialogues*, that book where he controversially presents *himself* as the glaze over the entire universe. Is such self-positioning on par with the self-absorption Hobbes expounds about as some have concluded? Antoine Lilti in his “The Writing of Paranoia: Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Paradoxes of Celebrity” identifies such rash conclusions of the likes of Jacques-Henri Meister, who claimed *Dialogues* be the result of a “dark imagination, exalted to the point of delirium” or Johann-Gottfried Herder, who believed the work be the product of the machinations of one of Rousseau’s enemies, who wrote the book and used Rousseau’s moniker in order to discredit him.<sup>149</sup> However, Lilti acknowledges Foucault as one of the few to recognize the uniqueness of this work:

[Foucault] set it in the framework of the autobiographical works, between the *Confessions* and the *Reveries*. But above all, he tore the text away from the theme of madness, in stressing its coherence and hidden rigor. With this move, the text escaped from the paradigm of insanity to be integrated fully into the body of Rousseau’s work. As Foucault memorably put it: “the work, by definition, is non-madness.” Yet at the same time, by the very gesture of breaking the link between the text and its author, and claiming to do a purely semiotic reading, Foucault also broke with what is at the heart of the text: the affirmation of an existential suffering and the demand for its recognition. Foucault treated *Rousseau, Judge of Jean-Jacques* entirely as a literary text, when

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<sup>147</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality*, (London: Penguin Books, 1984), 98.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Antoine Lilti, ‘The Writing of Paranoia: Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Paradoxes of Celebrity’, *Representations* 103, 2008, 56.

the work itself was intended first and foremost as an action—one meant entirely as a denunciation of injustice.<sup>150</sup>

Foucault suggests the kind of continuity being drawn in this chapter concerning this trilogy of works. If any “necessity” exists for Rousseau (he hated that word) it is that for him to be able to articulate his monistic vision, the “object” could neither be something outside himself which was the fatal flaw of the mechanics of materialists from Descartes through to Newton and beyond; nor is the “object” something inside himself from that proximal position passion worked for Hobbes and Hume. Rousseau managed this conundrum in *Dialogues* in a similar manner to Montaigne, who in his essay, “Sur l’inégalité entre les hommes”, does away with “objects”, resonating with objectivity and subjectivity of that highly “negative” variety common in the late Renaissance: kingliness and serfdom.<sup>151</sup>

[...] if you haggle over a horse, you strip off its trappings and examine it naked and base - or if he does wear an ornamental cover as used to be the case for horses offered to sale to royalty, it was only spread over the inessentials [...] so that you should not waste time over its handsome coat or its broad crupper but mainly concentrate on its legs, eyes and hooves - the parts which really matter.<sup>152</sup>

But Montaigne’s final message in this work - a work happening also to explore inequality - comes in the form of a parable that cascades down through history arriving at Rousseau’s feet as a piece of wisdom, whose moral message will be referenced at different stages of this dissertation. Montaigne told the story of how King Pyrrhus, who during a consultation with the shrewd advisor, Cyneas, saw no shortage of limits to his quest for empire: “master Italy”, “cross into Gaul and Spain”, “subjugate Africa”, to which Cyneas asked: “And in the end (?)”.

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid, 57.

<sup>151</sup> Conceptualizing ‘objectivity’ and ‘subjectivity’ in deep ‘negativity’ has a somewhat different appearance than its normal handling in ‘positive’ explanation. In ‘negativity’: if the king is the “object” to which all relations recede and is thus the point of ‘Truth’ in a world; his serfs - or ‘subjects’ - only have a claim to meaningfulness in recourse to this ‘king’. In ‘positivity’: objectivity is Truth said to be outside scrutiny; and in subjectivity it is truth that cannot be ‘scrutinized’ but it is good enough to be a truth if the subject claims it as such. These two antipodes being both ‘positive’ means that they oxymoronicly have the same claim to truth, leading to the (circular) impasse in philosophical inquiries into the distinction. This is less problematic with ‘objectivity’ and ‘subjectivity’ in deeper ‘negativity’ where the ‘positivity’ is not present to give a sense of contradiction.

<sup>152</sup> Michel de Montaigne, ‘On the inequality there is between us’, op. cit., 289.

“The world and then I can rest, replied Pyrrhus.<sup>153</sup> Cyneas then gives these penetrating words of advice:

Then tell me, Sire, if that is what you want, what is keeping you from doing it at once? Why do you not place yourself now where you say you aspire to be, and spare yourself all the toil and risk that you are putting between you and it?<sup>154</sup>

Rousseau took Cyneas’ advice when he wrote his *Dialogues*. The vanity Rousseau railed against in the human quest for knowledge; his forsaking of the literary coterie in Paris and all the pushing against “objects” of natural and human sciences, tastes and fashions all ended in a decision to embrace the “negativity” of his own imagination, which was the true source of what was intoxicating King Pyrrhus in the first place. But virtue was that which Rousseau determined to fill this space, his “plenum”; and appropriately it all began with the reflexivity of a very special relationship he maintained with a woman who “meant the *world* to him”: his “Mama”, Madame de Warnes.

Of all people to consult concerning Rousseau’s perspective on virtue, it is the arch-seducer, Casanova, who elucidates best its inner workings. Not only does Peter Cryle, in “The Libertine Ethics of Casanova and his Contemporaries”, examine Casanova and his art of seduction but he also sketches the eighteenth-century evaluation of what constituted virtue and what did not. What is surprising is that virtue to be authentic required erotic pull, or in Cryle’s words, “a play of feminine resistance”, whose absence implied boorish prudery, earning the disparagements: “béguéules” or “devotes”.<sup>155</sup> Cryle makes good use of Casanova’s own words to demonstrate this point, laying out as well “virtue” as a “negative” force to what is otherwise “prejudice; and thus “positive”:

[t]he exercise of virtue cost nothing for a woman who is not in love; she might be aware of being ungrateful, but she will happily set aside gratitude for the sake of prejudice.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid, 298.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Peter Cryle, “The Libertine Ethics of Casanova and his Contemporaries” in *Libertine Enlightenment: Sex, Liberty and Licence in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 56-57.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid, 57.

If Casanova rejects prejudicial “objects” in constellations of dogmas and abstract moralities, his art of seduction, just as Grimm’s has already been shown to work, operates on its own “positive” terms, in Cryle’s words, “libertinage [...] is quite simply a set of stylized moves”<sup>157</sup> and it is here where Casanova-Rousseau comparisons end. The erotic pull of virtue in de Warnes and Rousseau’s relationship, documented in “Livre III: 1731-1732” of *Confessions*, had a salient metaphysical dimension only realizable when Rousseau’s oeuvre is taken in its totality; and it is this relationship, to which we now turn to get at the “plenum” being developed.

If eroticism for Casanova is the pull towards a consummation that is always left elusive, for Rousseau it is wholeness, filling the universe and having a temporal indefiniteness that engages in an interesting way with Spinoza’s notion of “striving”. “Negativity” for Spinoza, of course, ends at “God”, the “First Cause”, to whom a “freedom of the will” can never apply:

[f]or the will [...] requires a cause by which it is determined to exist and produce an effect [...] although from a given will [...] infinitely many things may follow, God still cannot be said [...] to act from freedom of will, any more [...] than motion and rest.<sup>158</sup>

So any comparison needs to qualify the very different metaphysics of Spinoza and his mechanical necessity and of Rousseau and his passionate eroticism. This being said, however, the usefulness of the comparison comes in how Casanova’s eroticism pales in both extent and implication compared with Rousseau’s when situated within Spinoza’s reflection on “definite” time:

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid, 59.

<sup>158</sup> Spinoza, op. cit., 22. \* Spinoza does leave open the possibility of a ‘pleasure-seeking’ God as one less ‘absurd’ than one committed solely to the maintenance of good. Were such a ‘God’ to exist, it may even quell the ‘anti-metaphysics’ (i.e., or pro-myth) rants of d’Holbach: ‘I confess that [the] opinion, which subjects all things to a certain indifferent will of God, and makes all things *depend on his good pleasure, is nearer the truth than that of those who maintain that God does all things for the sake of the good*. For they seem to place something outside of God, which does not depend on God, to which God attends, as a model, in what he does, and at which he aims, as at a certain goal. This is simply to subject God to fate. Nothing more absurd can be maintained about God, whom we have shown to be the first and only free cause, both of the essence of all things, and of their existence. So I shall waste no time in refuting this absurdity’ (Spinoza, op. cit., 24-25). (Emphasis added)

For if [striving by which a thing strives to persevere in its being] involves a limited time, which determined the thing's duration, then it would follow just from that very power by which the things exists that it could not exist after that limited time, but that it would have to be destroyed. But [...] this is absurd. Therefore, the striving by which a thing exists involves no definite time. On the contrary, since [...] it will always continue to exist by the same power by which it now exists, unless it is destroyed by an external cause, this striving involves indefinite time, q.e.d.<sup>159</sup>

Casanova's eroticism fits Spinoza's "definite". Unlike how women for Casanova instilled only erratic infatuations, Madame de Warnes for Rousseau was the shadow cast over his entire oeuvre from her cameo as "Julie" in *La nouvelle Héloïse* to the hygienic prescription developed as his unique materialism, whose preliminary sketch is well understood despite its full explication never seeing the philosophical "light of day" in that never written *Morale Sensitive, ou Le Matérialisme du sage*. Just as Julie needed Wolmar to curb her extravagances, Rousseau saw Madame de Warnes needing hygienic prescriptions of her own to curb her foibles such as her spendthrift and impulsiveness to begin but never complete projects.<sup>160</sup> But it was her poor judgment concerning her initiation of Rousseau into the art of sexual pleasure that most affected him:

[n]o; I tasted the pleasure but I knew not what invincible sadness poisoned its charm. I felt as if I had committed incest [...] as I clasped her rapturously in my arms I wet her bosom with my tears [... a]s for her, she was neither sad nor excited.<sup>161</sup>

Rousseau's lamenting judgment of Madame de Warnes' careless indifference would really be an indictment of the Parisian coterie he abandoned in his retreat to the Hermitage; Madame de Warnes, a sycophant to this clique, had fallen under its pernicious sway:

M. de Tavel, her first lover, was her master of philosophy, and the principles which he taught her were those he required in order to seduce her. Finding her attached to her husband and her duties, and always cold, intellectual, and unassailable through her senses, he attacked her by means of sophistries [...] s]exual union, he argued, was an act most unimportant in itself; marital fidelity need merely be kept an appearance; its moral importance being confined to its effect on public opinion [...].<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid, 75-76.

<sup>160</sup> In his essay 'Madame de Warnes' Havelock Ellis confirms her volatile temperament that would lead her under false pretences from the security of her husband and ultimately bring her to poverty and obscurity in later life: '[...] her fondness for industrial enterprises, her extravagant generosity, the vanity that led her into exaggeration and falsehood, her independence and dislike of advice, her leaning to pietism, the ease with which she made acquaintance with people who flattered her [...]' (Havelock Ellis, 'Madame de Warnes', *The Virginia Quarterly Review: A National Journal of Literature and Discussion*, Summer 1933, section IV).

<sup>161</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Confessions*, op. cit., 189-90.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid, 190.

This was the culture of the salon. A social circle, where women played an important role, one, of which Rousseau disapproved. He admonished these women for dabbling in seduction, feigning morality - all of which made them likely targets for seducers like Casanova. However, Amelia Gere Mason in her study of salon culture - particularly her focus study on Madame Geoffrin's salon - recognizes the importance of salon life - and the role of women - on the intellectual pulse of society. She argues these salons were the "cradle[s] of the new philosophy".<sup>163</sup> One of the iterative themes to punctuate this dissertation is the impact fashion had on popular science and how Rousseau and Sade could be popular but neither for the reasons they intended nor the reasons some claim.<sup>164</sup> Mason sees in the doctrine of freedom and equality, espoused by philosophes like Montesquieu, d'Alembert and Voltaire, a "positive" bulwark of popular appeal, challenging long-held social norms and customs much more "negative" given their antecedent position. Rousseau defended institutions of domestic obligations. Madame de Warnes was caught up in this salon culture and Rousseau's literary journey aimed to save her. In *Émile*, for example, Rousseau vehemently opposed the conception of feminine freedom and equality, promoted in the salon, admonishing wives and mothers to follow what is now understood as a more "negative" course of "nature":

[...] let mothers deign to nurse their children, morals will reform themselves, nature's sentiments will be awakened in every heart, the state repeopled [...] the attraction of domestic life is the best counterpoison to bad morals.<sup>165</sup>

Perhaps the best example of the toxic mix of science and popular appeal Rousseau lamented comes through Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle's flirtatious science lesson to a fair lady in *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes*. Fontenelle was keenly conscious of his audience when

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<sup>163</sup> Amelia Gere Mason, *The Women of the French Salons* (Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), 176. \* '[i]f the drawing rooms of the seventeenth century were the cradle of refined manners and a new literature, those of the eighteenth century were literally the cradle of the new philosophy.' (Full quotation)

<sup>164</sup> Rousseau was a literary sensation although it was his popular treatment that most antagonized him, proving how much his works were misunderstood to the general public. In Sade's case, he was not a sensation as such although theses of the likes of Jacob and Hunt's would make him into a 'popular' figure but not for reasons that have anything to do with the spirit of his works.

<sup>165</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile, or on Education* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 46.

he set out to reduce the cosmos to “objects” whose “positivity” matched only that of what constituted his own world:

[...] there are Men in the Moon, for do but observe how much the Face of Nature is chang'd between this and China; other Visages, Shapes, Manners [...] Principles of Reason [...] between us and the Moon the alteration must be much more considerable.<sup>166</sup>

And in a stroke, of which M. de Tavel would have certainly approved, he cajoles his attentive listener to switch allegiance to these delightful “objects” of the night and away from the “light of day”, whose uniformity is routine; translucence, ignorance. Fontenelle sets up the scene of this grand seduction this way:

But since you talk of Romances, why do Lovers in their Songs and Elegies address themselves to the Night? 'Tis the Night Madam, says I, that crowns their Joy and therefore deserves their Thanks. But 'tis the Night, says she, that hears their Complaints, and how comes it to pass, the Day is so little trusted with their Secrets? I confess, Madam, says I, the Night has somewhat more Melancholy Air than the Day; we fancy the Stars march more silently than the Sun, and our Thoughts wander with the more liberty, whilst we think all the World at rest but our selves: Besides, the Days is more uniform, we see nothing but the Sun, and the Light in the Firmament; whilst the Night shews us variety of Objects, and gives us ten Thousand Stars, which inspire us with as many pleasant Ideas. She reply'd, what you say is true, I love the Stars, there is somewhat charming in them, and I could almost be angry with the Sun for effacing'em. And I can't, says I, pardon him, for keeping all those Worlds from my sight: What Worlds, says he, looking earnestly upon me, what Worlds do you mean? <sup>167</sup>

Recall Spinoza saying “infinitely many things may follow from a free will”; this certainly applies to these stargazers on this night; and the products of their imaginations are framed in what fancy comes of a Casanovian “pick-up line”. Rousseau uses his imagination in the manner Cyneas (through Montaigne) advises King Pyrrhus: “to conquer without conquering”, in neither direction nor definiteness; he fills out the extent of the “plenum”. Rousseau presents his relationship with his “Mama” as the closest thing to a (“positive”) description for such an obscure notion as the “negativity” filling this “plenum”. The alignment of seducer, conqueror and scientist in this discussion brings to question just how closely they are tied to similar goals and approaches. Casanova, King Pyrrhus and Fontenelle all demonstrate how negativities like desire and imagination need not necessarily belong to the “plenum”, the innovation of how Rousseau makes them both belong should be seen as his principle

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<sup>166</sup> Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle, *Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds*, e-text of original in The Glen Negley Collection of Utopian Literature (Durham, Duke University Library, 2010), 59.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, 5-6.



intellectual contribution. There is here great implication for the History of Science for it too developed out of similar “positive” pushes as those ones exerted by King Pyrrhus and Fontenelle. (See Chapter 4.1 for a recasting of this theme in the focus on “adventurers and fortune-seekers”.)

## 1.5 Incest and Child Abandonment

One of the goals of investing the time to develop Rousseau’s metaphysics is to show how it is that Sade arrives, picks up from where Rousseau leaves off in his conceptualisation; and then goes on to expand and modify it for his own literary purposes. Although presented in the guise of autobiographical anecdotes, e.g., Rousseau’s predilection for (passive) flagellation; his concern for incest; and habit of abandoning his children all in this list have much broader metaphysical significance and Sade had the perspicuity to recognize this, recruiting many of these same themes for his own ruminations. For example, flagellation would play an increasingly more complex role for Sade in both biography and prose. Passive and active flagellation are documented respectively in two criminal indictments against Sade, one involving Jeanne Testard, who Schaeffer narrates “[Sade] told [...] to flog him with the iron-wire whip after having it heated red-hot in the fire”;<sup>168</sup> and Rose Keller, who, according to the “rap sheet”, was whipped numerous times by Sade after which he “dripped hot wax on her wounds”.<sup>169</sup> And in *Les 120 Journées de Sodome*, the subject of the next chapter, Sade orders passive and active flagellation at different points of gradation in the “positive-to-negative” scale he adumbrates, positioning the latter on the more “negative” (or, in his words, more complex) end. The topic of incest was introduced in the previous section and in order to establish more precisely the types of parameters Sade would use in his writings it is worth adding some depth to the significance of incest for Rousseau. In addition, it is worth

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<sup>168</sup> Neil Schaeffer, op. cit., 57.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid, 92.

introducing another important theme springing from Rousseau's voluptuousness: his illegitimate children. This theme would be picked up by Sade in his reflections on infanticide.

It was earlier claimed that, although Madam de Warens was the prototype of Julie in *La nouvelle Héloïse*, during Rousseau's deflowering she played the role with the scriptedness of an inculcating courtier, not with the same passion that followed Julie through to her downfall. It was Rousseau's passion that was really depicted in the character of Julie:

[i]magine my ardent and lascivious temperament, my heated blood, my love-intoxicated heart, my vigour, my sound health, and my youth [... c]onsider that in this condition, though thirsting for the love of woman I had not yet approached one [...].<sup>170</sup>

It was Rousseau treating himself and Madame de Warens in synonymy and simultaneity that constitutes the height of the "plenum", and the width of his monistic vision:

[h]er picture was always present in my heart and left the room for no one else. For me she was the only woman in the whole world.<sup>171</sup>

Any addition or subtraction had cosmological consequences either as "I only felt the full strength of my attachment to her when she was out of my sight" or

I ceaselessly sought opportunities for private interviews, which I enjoyed with a passion that turned to fury whenever troublesome visitors came to disturb us;<sup>172</sup>

and all passed with a kind of indefiniteness that can be said to de-materialize Spinoza's notion of "striving":

[explaining how he felt in Madame de Warens' presence: i]f ever a waking man's dream seemed like a prophetic vision, that *revery* of mine did [...] I was only deceived in my dream's seeming duration.<sup>173</sup>

And, for Rousseau, the preservation of his chastity was the guarantee for maintaining the cosmological order:

[she left his] senses no time to be aroused by others, safeguarded me against her and all her sex [...] I was chaste because I loved her.<sup>174</sup>

For Rousseau the tears that wet his "Mama's" bosom during the *incest* scene were worthy to be shed by all caught up in the crestfallen narrative of human history: the timeless problem of

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<sup>170</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Confessions*, 187-88.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid, 109.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid, 107.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid, 108. (Emphasis added)

<sup>174</sup> Ibid, 109.

the “proximal” concern for reproduction, i.e., the inherent “positivity” in both its approach (seduction) and result (procreation). Rousseau brings the issue to the deepest point of crisis in that myth of human order, embedded deep in Western tradition: the tragedy in the Garden of Eden. Rousseau’s monistic vision really has not been adequately set in this drama unfolding as an incest story between two family members - or *siblings* - Adam and Eve. This drama will also be vital for reading Sade as writers like John Phillips have been keen to point out (See *The Marquis de Sade: A Very Short Introduction*). Rousseau’s words are elegiac and haunting on what was lost when sexuality entered the human narrative. He offers an alternative to the one ending in incest, shame, expulsion, and the curse of matrimony; and its presentation is infused with the expected high dose of “negativity” such that traditional “positive” roles and designations of human interactions begin to dissolve away:

What might have been my undoing was in fact my salvation, at least for the time. Intoxicated with the pleasure of living beside her, and burning with desire to spend my life with her, I saw in her always, whether she were absent or present, a tender mother, a beloved sister, a delighted friend, and nothing more. I saw her always in that way, as always the same, and never any other woman.<sup>175</sup>

In at least one aspect of his family-based metaphysics, however, Rousseau appears to fall into contradiction: he fathered five children and sent all of them to foundling hospitals to be raised by the state. He offers this notorious justification:

I will be content with a general statement that in handing my children over for the State to educate, for lack of means to bring them up myself, by destining them to become workers and peasants *instead of adventurers, and fortune-hunters*, I thought I was acting as a citizen and a father, and looked upon myself as a member of Plato’s Republic.<sup>176</sup>

Although panned by critics in both life<sup>177</sup> and death,<sup>178</sup> Rousseau’s statement is only consistent when placed on the metaphysical scale of “negativity” and “positivity” being

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid, 322. (Emphasis added)

<sup>177</sup> One friend-turned-enemy, Voltaire, had this to say about Rousseau and the life of misery he brought upon his long term partner, Thérèse, who begat the majority of Rousseau’s children, and Thérèse’s mother, who was forced to contend with the chaotic lifestyle of Rousseau, the peregrine philosopher and constant exile – to the detriment of her own health. “Jean-Jacques Rousseau was a charlatan who drags with him, from village to village, from mountain to mountain, the wretched woman whose mother he killed and whose children he exposed at the gates of an asylum, rejecting a charitable person who wanted to take care of them, abjuring all natural feelings even as he casts off those of honour and religion” (Robert Zaretsky and John T. Scott, *The*

proposed in this paper. (The specific issue of “adventurers and fortune-hunters” will be the subject of analysis in Chapter 4.1: Metaphysical Explorers.) In *Les Confessions*, Rousseau seems of two minds about being a derelict father. In the narration of his time spent at the soirées of Madame la Selle, Rousseau admits being caught up in the customs of what Mason has already described as the principles of the Salon (p. 65). Rousseau describes dinner table chatter including such “ordinary topics” as “honourable people injured, husbands deceived, women seduced, secret accouchements”<sup>179</sup> and claimed to have to burnish ones salacious wit and furtive coquetry in order to survive and thrive. This necessity has already been suggested in discussions on “articulations” in Grimm’s love display (p. 46) and that seductive science lesson, Fontenelle delivered when exhorting a young maiden to shift her alliance from the light of the sun to the darkness of the night sky (p. 66). Despite this, Rousseau claims to part company with his fellow *salonnières* on one significant point: he was by no means following their “morals”: “I [...] gradually adopted, thank Heaven! not the morals, but the principles, which I found established”.<sup>180</sup> Rousseau claims that he preserved his moral rectitude throughout his time in the Salon, morality being for him that aspect of himself, descending what can now be considered the fully formed “plenum”. With analogic “negativity” and “positive” available to untangle contradictions, Rousseau’s justification can now appear reasonable. And so can his justification for abandoning his children. His justification consists of rolling back what had come to be the nascent family model in his time, that one of the burgeoning middle class. In *Discours sur l’origine de l’inégalité*, Rousseau describes how it

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Philosopher’s Quarrel: Rousseau, Hume, and the Limits of Human Understanding (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 69).

<sup>178</sup> R.P. Locke cites Edmund Burke in suggesting Rousseau had only vanity as his guide for the excesses of his thoughts and feelings. Vanity has already been featured as a “positive” principle of the salon; and Burke too intuitively its isolating effect amidst the Revolution: “I cannot stand forward, and give praise or blame to any thing which relates to human actions, and human concerns, on a simple view of the object as it stands stripped of every *relation*, in all the nakedness and solitude of metaphysical abstraction” (2.1.12) (Emphasis added). Notably, it is the very notion of “relations”, framed in this article as “negativity” that Burke denies Rousseau (and even gives the usual accusation about Rousseau, the family man: he is “a lover of his kind; but hater of his kindred” (cited by Locke, p. 357)).

<sup>179</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Confessions*, 332.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

was that the underpinnings of family relations began to reflect the proximal concerns of this ascendant group, i.e., its hunger for economic prosperity, industrial progress and social mobility. For Rousseau, children in metaphysical “distance” relate to parents much differently and he recruits what deceptively appears as anthropological claims<sup>181</sup> to support his position:

No individual was recognized as the father of several children until such time as they lived in families together and settled around him. The goods of the father, of which he is truly the master, are the ties which keep his children dependent on him, and he may choose to give them a share of his estate only to the extent that they have deserved it from him by constant deference to his will.<sup>182</sup>

Children of ancient tribes were born in steep “negative” decline to the whole of the community, that is, children did not belong to only one set of natural parents; the only due children owed parents was the respect for giving life. Nursing and raising the progeny of tribes were both privileges and obligations for all members. Later, in “La Profession de Foi du vicaire savoyard” (1762) (appended to *Émile, ou De l’ éducation*) Rousseau further dislodges children from “positive” captivity, this time from evangelical zeal. (In Chapter 3.1 this “positivity” will be linked to the legacy of the Protestant Reformation.) He argues:

[...] if there is only one true religion and every man is obliged to follow it under the threat of damnation, one’s life must be spend in studying them all, in going deeper into them, in comparing them, in roaming around the country where each is established.<sup>183</sup>

Rousseau goes on to present a global dystopia as a *reductio ad absurdum* where all the regimes of social life: “trades, the arts, the human sciences, and all the civil occupations”<sup>184</sup> fall into disarray while peregrine (“positive”) truth-seekers never stay in one place long enough for civil society to ever take hold. Rousseau then presents the argument that precipitated his exile, the condemnation of his *Émile* and its public burning in 1762: “if the son of a Christian does well in following his father’s religion without a profound and

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<sup>181</sup> Although many of the themes broached in *Discours sur l’origine de l’inégalité* appear as those any anthropologist today would contemplate, e.g., origins of language, ethnographical descriptions of “private man”, a discipline belonging ostensibly to the “positive” category of social sciences creates enough discrepancy for claims of overlapping observations and conclusions to be fallacious.

<sup>182</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, op. cit., 126.

<sup>183</sup> Rousseau, *Emile or On Education* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 306.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

impartial examination”, how about the son of a Turk (?).<sup>185</sup> This pattern of rolling back objects from “positivity” to “negativity” was witnessed earlier in Chapters 1.2 and 1.3 when the evanescent object of scientific inquiry and the mechanism of object formation for Rousseau were subjects of exploration. This pattern will be seen applied again at different points in this dissertation as Sade deployed a similar strategy, the principle difference being, of course, a choice of strategic orientation: Rousseau aimed at virtue; Sade, vice. In order to transition towards the metaphysics, infusing Sade’s *œuvre*, it is worth presenting the point where Rousseau gave up on not only his audience but also his commitment to virtue. The point of terminus arrived as a reverie, and it is here where Sade continues on where Rousseau left off.

### 1.5 Towards the Bastille: Epistemology of a Reverie

During the “Cinquième Promenade” of his *Rêveries*, Rousseau described the kinds of activities that would have occupied one of these “solitary” days. Early morning he would be on his knees with his microscope, flipping through his reference book, *Systema Naturae*, peeking into the private lives of plants: the “long forked stamina of the Brunelle”, “the explosion of the fruit” of the balsam-apple and the box-trees’ buds, “the thousand little acts of fructification, all of which would overwhelm him with delight”.<sup>186</sup> Midmorning he would go to the apple orchard but not before first scanning the sky, preparing in advance a “stock of amusements for the employment of the afternoon”<sup>187</sup> indoors in case it rained. He would climb one of the trees and pick apples until some locals stopped by for lunch. After lunch he would duck these guests’ bothersome company, walk to the lake, jump in a boat and row himself out to the middle, lay supine, eyes towards the heavens, thinking this thought:

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, ...*To which was added Reveries of a Solidary Walker*, op. cit., 276.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid, 277.

[why in] enjoying a thousand pleasing, though confused reveries, which, without any particular fixed object, were... an hundred times preferable to what I have ever found among the most delightful of what are called the pleasures of life.<sup>188</sup>

As stated in the introduction of this chapter both the tone and audience of *Rêveries* departed radically from his previous works where he had been interested in developing his particular form of materialism based on obeisance to “objects” in deep “negativity” all orientated to promote virtue. His motivation had been an elegiac attempt to re-imagine the proper conditions of his time at the Chambéry estates where he and Mama were once again together, guided by the wisdom of such characters as Émile’s instructor, Julie’s husband, Wolmar and Rousseau himself, the judge. And as this vision in this chapter has been presented having monistic reach, it perforce applies to all his readers in any time, place or under any circumstance. But now on St. Peter’s Island he was happy to leave the books, writing paper and ink-stand “well packed” and replace “stupid manuscripts and musty books with an apartment full of flowers and plants”.<sup>189</sup> He had given up on his audience and his “plenum”; he was writing only for himself. Some insight concerning his attitude of decisive retreat from “objects” is given by Montaigne a century earlier in his essay “Comment l’ame discharge ses passions sur des objects faux, quand les vrais luy defaillent” where he describes, using a Latin adage, the kind of step he himself is unwilling to take:

[As winds, unless they come up against dense wood, lose their force and are distended into empty space;] it seems that the soul too, in the same way, loses itself in itself when shaken and disturbed unless it is given something to grasp on to; and so we must always provide it with an object to butt up against and to act upon.<sup>190</sup>

Notably Montaigne describes the space of the absence of objects as one that is in fact something; he borrows the Latin word for “distend” to describe an empty space that has something by way of “distension’s” synonyms: “swelling” or “inflating”. (Recall here Bordeu’s theoretical characterization.) It is not the case that Rousseau in writing for himself had finally discovered his “self” after a lifelong writing journey that took him towards

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid, 277-78.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid, 275.

<sup>190</sup> Michel de Montaigne, ‘How the soul discharges its emotions against false objects when lacking real ones’, op. cit., 19.

increasing “negativity” and further recession from proximity, which has been shown to form those “positive” marks that build towards ideas of “selves”. This would be a major retreat and is unlikely especially since “positive” “selves” are the very things Rousseau extirpates as judge and cosmological constant in *Dialogues*:

[t]out cela prouve invinciblement que la haine dont J.J. est l’objet, n’est point la haine du vice & de la méchanceté, mais celle de l’individu: Méchant ou bon, il n’importe [...] <sup>191</sup>

If anything Rousseau even beginning here to discount what constitutes “evil” or “good” is a drift away from what D’Holbach had pinned down as those digital (and rudimentarily “positive”) concerns: “inimicality to his welfare” or “congeniality to man’s happiness”. Now it appears that the question simply be a matter of positionality on a “negative-positive” scale. And reveries happen to be the furthest “negative” point where knowledge begins to resemble nature and take on something like “pure motion”. Enter Sade, who would pick up from where Rousseau left off and Rousseau even plays the soothsayer to this point when he states in *Rêveries*:

[t]his kind of reverie may be enjoyed in every situation where we can obtain tranquility; and I have often thought that in the Bastille, or a dungeon, where no object struck my sight, I could enjoy agreeable contemplation. <sup>192</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Jean-Jacques, *Dialogues*, op. cit., 121.

<sup>192</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, ...*To which was added Reveries of a Solidary Walker*, op. cit., 285.



## Chapter 2

Sodom**2.1 The Science of Cesspools**

Eighteenth-century arguments for monism tended always to presuppose origins in the cesspools of the natural world. The marshes in outlying areas of cities and town that stoked fears of miasmas during times of plague; an airtight bottle containing a fermented mass of organic detritus, the birthplace of Needham's famous "animalculae"; preformation: "the existence of the germ in the female before fecundation [being] one of the most general laws of nature"<sup>193</sup> as St-Martin cites Spallanzani; all these sites of slime and stink produced anxiety for all those gazers who saw what was only inhospitable to observation and ever inchoate to comprehension. Some sense of this anxiety comes through in Montaigne's disorientation when wind has only a treeless expanse as passage - no object to grasp on to, only "distension" (p. 73); a shared feature of cesspools. But the cesspool now has a familiar topography. St-Martin has adumbrated it as the "context of a negative progression caused by specific forces" of what otherwise would be delineable by "positive" features. In this chapter Sade's novel, *Les 120 Journées de Sodome* will be explored as a "cesspool" and the most "negative" of all his works - born really on the eve of the French Revolution and arriving to posterity under the strangest of circumstances. It is a book Sade believed till death was forever lost to the looting that took place in his prison cell when the Bastille was overrun by revolutionaries in 1789; disappearing on account of his wife, René, not being able to retrieve in time what belongings had remained behind, items including an extensive library and a modest selection of his own writings. This retrieval was of course necessary because of Sade's transfer to Charenton a week earlier due to disruptive behavior causing commotion in a tense Bastille already on edge. He had been haranguing the growing rioters outside his

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<sup>193</sup> St-Martin, *De la médecine chez Sade; Disséquer la vie, narrer la mort*, op. cit., 139.

prison cell using that famous “piss megaphone”,<sup>194</sup> stirring up, those who would listen to a higher revolutionary pitch with his colorful claims of prisoner abuse and other atrocities happening in the Bastille. But in the end someone did find the manuscript in its make-shift scroll form in its hiding place, managing to hand it over to the one, Marquis of Villeneuve-Trans, who ensured its safekeeping as a family heirloom for over a century until finally in 1900 the dermatologist and psychiatrist Iwan Bloch got his hands on it and began the tradition of engagement with the text as a scientific document. The “resurrected” *Les 120 Journées* truly came accompanied with a “new body” as it would be considered a celebrated precursor to a nineteenth-century psychiatric tradition (emerging within the domain of sexology) that aimed to document qualitatively all psychosexual disorders imaginable so as to fill the pages of an encyclopedia of “positive” knowledge. Specifying this particular formation of Sade and offering its preliminary refutation is useful here to set the stage for working *Les 120 Journées* against scientific assertions in its own age, with which Sade would not have agreed especially those embodied in the figure, Jean Le Rond d’Alembert, and his famous *Discours Préliminaire de l’Encyclopédie de Diderot*; and for this juxtaposition that familiar question of “objects” will again take center stage.

Bloch’s work in sexology also emerged out of a scientific tradition that presupposed a unity amongst all natural and human sciences, one that could be corroborated through scientific progress. A poignant example of this belief came in the form of Herbert Spencer’s

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<sup>194</sup> ‘On July 2, 1789, Governor de Launay was “obliged” by “the current circumstances” - as he reported the next day to M. de Villedeuil, minister of the King’s household – to order the suspension of Sade’s promenade privileges. “It is impossible to allow him promenades on the towers,” de Launay explained; “the cannon are loaded, and that would risk the gravest danger.” Sade flew into a rage at Lossinore, the turnkey who conveyed de Launay’s new orders, and he rushed to his window. It was noon. A mob had been gathering all morning beneath the walls of the Bastille. According to Governor de Launay’s letter to M. de Ville deuil, Sade “appeared at his window and shouted with all his strength, and was heard by the entire neighbourhood and by passers-by, that they were slaughtering, they were assassinating the prisoner of the Bastille, and that the people ought to come to their aid [...] When de Launay refused to change his order, Sade ripped off a pissing tube from the wall. This implement, consisting a tin tube with a funnel attached, was used for dumping waste into the fosse, which functioned as both defence and sewer. Sade used the pissing tube as a megaphone to shout his “invectives against the governor’ (Neil Schaeffer, op. cit., 381). (Full quotation)

thesis, in his book, *First Principles of a New System of Philosophy*, where he argued how the homogeneity of life comprises conditions of unstable equilibrium wrought by evolution: competing earlier forms, simple, primitive, seeking to co-opt higher ones for some particular gain, narrow and automatic; these higher ones in turn inhibiting the more primitive ones in order to maintain some semblance of social fluidity and generality for individual gain of a more nuanced variant.<sup>195</sup> Such a principle could apply equally to a natural science like neurology (cortical vs. reptilian regions of the brain) and a human one like political science (multicultural vs. atavistic states) and “positive” facts were sought to backfill all that remained in between. Among Bloch’s contemporaries in the field of sexology, Havelock Ellis and Richard von Krafft-Ebing pursued similar stratification and expansiveness. Especially for Ellis, in his chapter “Love and Pain” of *Studies of the Psychology of Sex: Vol. 3* he, on the topic of “love bites”, drew a similar Spenserian scale beginning from an Arabian mare biting her mate during coitus, members of primate cultures in New Caledonia making bite marks on the neck and shoulders a sign of a “quadrupedal attitude”, biting in high literature (Ovid, Plutarch and Horace) as an expression of affection and finally the devouring feature of the Eucharist as a symbol of ideal love.<sup>196</sup> And in the first chapter, “A System of Psychology of Sexual Life” in his *Psychopathia Sexualis* this expansiveness is not lost to Krafft-Ebing either, who explored possible links between topics as seemingly antipodal as biological reproduction and religion:

Religion as well as sexual love is mystical and transcendental. In sexual love the real object of the instinct, i.e., propagation of the species is not always present to the mind during the act, and the impulse is much stronger than could be justified by the gratification that can possibly be derived from it. Religious love strives for the possession of an object that is absolutely ideal, and cannot be defined by experimental knowledge [...].<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Herbert Spencer, *First Principles of a New Science of Philosophy* (New York: D. Appelton and Company, 1897), 401.

<sup>196</sup> Havelock Ellis, ‘Love and Pain’, *Studies of the Psychology of Sex: Vol. 3* (Blackmask Online Collection, 2004), 64.

<sup>197</sup> Richard von Krafft-Ebing, ‘A System of Psychology of Sexual Life’, *Psychopathia Sexualis* (New York: Rebman, 1886), 9.

The question of “objects” takes center stage for Krafft-Ebing as that which cannot be pinned down on either side of the extremes of this scale and even for Ellis his conclusions operate on conceptual clusters where an object like a “bite” can speciously travel unimpeded from the deepest “cesspool” of organic life to the highest nodal point of cultural evolution, say De Vinci’s “Last Supper”, housed in the refractory of Santa Maria Delle Grazie - *but only as something “positive”*. Designations like scientism, evolutionism and psychologism have been used - often in derogatory senses - to describe these constellations of “positive” knowledges that seek out both physical and conceptual “objects” to explain everything within the range of life, ranges staggered according to the strata just seen, low to high, the formal structure of disciplines such as ethnography and even to an extent psychoanalysis.

Certainly it is no surprise that Sade shared a like monistic vision in his striving to develop a model to account for the whole gamut of human phenomena one he approximated using the poles: “Nature”, the limit of the objective world and “desire”, that of subjectivity. Sade, speaking through Duc de Blangis in the introduction of *Les 120 Journées*, is careful though to refer to subjectivities only as placeholders and advising self-discovery be only what lightens the darkened recesses:

Many of the extravagances you are about to see illustrated will doubtless displace you, yes, I am well aware of it, but there are amongst them a few which will warm you to the point of costing you some fuck, and, reader, is all we ask of you; if we have not said everything, analyzed everything, tax us not with *partiality*, for you cannot expect us to have *guessed* what suits you the best [...] choose and let lie the rest without declaiming against that rest simply because it does not have the power to please you. Consider that it will enchant someone else, and be a philosopher.<sup>198</sup>

Sade is here refusing to hold subjectivity to a common interpretation; the truth of “others” and their place in the world neither comes from “guesswork” nor is beholden to any “partiality”; it comes when the right combination of objects strikes the subject’s own imagination and the spritzing ejaculate marks the moment of attestation. In Sade setting up

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<sup>198</sup> Marquis de Sade, ‘120 Days of Sodom’, *The Marquis de Sade: The 120 Days of Sodom, & Other Writings* (New York: Grove Press, 1966), 254.

his book as a menu or, in his words, a “banquet”: “six hundred different plates offer themselves to your appetite”<sup>199</sup> he is barring himself from this moment of attestation as well as everyone else for that matter. It is the agitated reader alone, who knows. This is an entirely different “author-audience” relationship than that one traced in the literary evolution of Rousseau, the subject of thorough investigation in the previous chapter. Sade’s is an “engaged disengagement” Rousseau was never able to achieve in his incremental merger with the audience, culminating in his *Dialogues* and then abrupt breaking away in *Rêveries*. Actually the configuration of relations Sade presents in *Les 120 Journées* harkens back to that Heidegger-inspired expression: “eclipse”, reinterpreted in the introduction as a key element to reading Sade and the manner he deploys *sensibilité*. To review: coequality is avoided by modelling relations on both synonymy and simultaneity; “as if at an *ecliptic* point of alignment, all objects inorganic, organic and conceptual alike stand at some nodal point, any proximal shift leftwards or right constituting a cracking open of the floodgates to the necessity of having to confront all in contingency and infinitude” (p. 27). It is felt that modern analyses of *Les 120 Journées* have missed these kinds of nuanced readings, neglecting to properly situate Sade in the literary and scientific contexts of his time. All has not been for naught however. John Phillips in his chapter “In the Cathedral of Libertinage: *Les 120 Journées de Sodome*” appears satisfied to compare the work with nineteenth-century nosological approaches but then acknowledges alternative perspectives:

And despite its undoubted similarity to the modern sexology manual, and its pretensions to the status of a scientific study, there are those who refuse to see it as a precursor to the work of Freud or Krafft-Ebing. Chantal Thomas rightly argues, for example, that, while Freud and Krafft-Ebing view any departure from normality as unhealthy, Sade actively advocates this.<sup>200</sup>

This advocacy that Phillips makes a point of mentioning is less a partisanship of “perversion for perversion’s sake” - an interpretation often pinned on Sade, the Romantic - and more an

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> John Phillips, ‘In the Cathedral of Libertinage: *Les 120 Journées de Sodome*’, *Sade: The Libertine Novels* (London: Pluto Press, 2001), 60.

erudite metaphysical reflection. Sade, like d'Holbach before him, is attempting to remove that partition science has always seemed to maintain in reducing its fact to what is either “congenial” or “inimical” to humankind. And the two do just this in order to approach a level of knowledge unadulterated by human fingerprints. As it will soon be shown these fingerprints were left all over science of the Enlightenment as well. In the next section *Les 120 Journées* will be considered a scientific document amongst another whose legitimacy is far more easy to accept to modern sensibilities given the presence of features more partial to how science is practiced and discussed today. As it was with the second section of the previous chapter “Armelle St-Martin and the History of the Evanescent Object of Science” (Chapter 1.2), analysis will work backwards from the most “positive” object positions to the more “negative” one with those in *Les 120 Journées* rounding out the “negative” species on the spectrum. To arrive here the scientific legacy of L'Encyclopédie de Diderot is an illuminating starting point.

## **2.2 The “General Systems of Human Knowledge” of Jean Le Rond d'Alembert and the Marquis de Sade**

In the introduction of this dissertation, Warman reading Sade as a “sensationalist materialist” was challenged for its insistence his project be about enlivening inert literary qualities through amplified “analogies” or “dramatizations” so as to lift “Frankenstein” up by the “words”, so to speak. She captured this aim with her use of the expression: “literality”. Though recognizing the unique status of *Les 120 Journées* Warman links Sade's documentary project to that other one of his age: the L'Encyclopédie de Diderot:

Having established the process of analysis and coherence [...] Sade turns to a more general problem: how can fact and analysis become something more ambitious, that is, link up into a system. (This was not a problem *Les Cent Vingt Journées* had had to face, however systematic its approach and exposition: all it needed was ‘l'intérêt d'un récit’. In fact it did not attempt to account for libertinage as a system in the way that the later books did.) ‘Ressemblances’ and ‘liaisons’ are the tools with which to construct something more general: we are back in the realm of analogy, and Sade is [...] indebted to it as a method of generalization [...] It is first structural (as the *Encyclopédie* article asserted) but is also used more widely and freely.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Caroline Warman, op. cit., 77.

The substance, to which Warman relates Sade's ambition as a writer - *Les 120 Journées* being only an initial step in this direction - must be seen through this bestseller of the mid-eighteenth century, captured best by D'Alembert in his famous *Discours Préliminaire de l'Encyclopédie de Diderot*. It is worth highlighting at the outset some points of contrast between the tenets of this encyclopedic project and key principles already established in this dissertation. In his "Translator's Introduction" to the *Discours Préliminaire* Richard N. Schwab calls the work a fusion of the "rationalism of Descartes" and the "empiricism of the likes of Bacon and Locke", all of whom work with materials hard-edged and "positive": "absolute principles" ascertained through deduction for the former; "hard facts", through inductive activities such as "experience, experimentation and sensation", the latter.<sup>202</sup> The manner these "materials" "link up into a system" - to use Warman's words - is spelled out by d'Alembert himself who reflects on the phenomenon of a magnet and the general implications it suggests:

Since knowledge and the necessary enlightenment concerning the physical cause of the properties of the magnet are lacking, it would doubtless be an investigation most worthy a philosopher to reduce, if possible, all these principles to a single one, while showing the liaison that they have with one another.<sup>203</sup>

Schwab, citing Ernst Cassirer, further adds shape to this zenith-like "singularity" when he calls the search for the unity of all phenomena one of the central aims of the Enlightenment:

[...] the universe [...] would only be a single fact [...] for whoever knew how to embrace it from a single point of view.<sup>204</sup>

These presentations really amount to "protrusions" of that "plenum" introduced in Chapter 1.4 - or better - "scabbings" of it for even if the vitality of an organ is forced outside itself as in the case of say swelling it is still by its nature nourished at the source; a "scab" is a "protrusion" dead and sterile, the pinnacle of its structure being as lofty as its crusty end. And, furthermore, "swelling" has been discussed already as that principle manifestation of

<sup>202</sup> Richard N. Schwab, 'Translator's Introduction', *Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopedia* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), xxxii.

<sup>203</sup> Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, *Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopedia*, op. cit., 23.

<sup>204</sup> Dave N. Schwab, op. cit., xxxiv.

“negative forces”, i.e. for Bordeu and his “erections” (p. 3) and Montaigne and his “distension of wind” (p. 73). D’Alembert even seems aware of the limitation of what he seeks after in this “singular fact” and the dangers of “death” and “sterility” it poses; he states:

[...] some have tried to reduce even the art of curing to calculation, the human body, that most complicated machine has been treated by our algebraic doctors as if it were the simplest or the easiest one to reduce to its component parts.<sup>205</sup>

Surely, he would have had in mind the likes of Herman Boerhaave or Archibald Pitcairne if read according to how T. Brown interpreted them in Rina Knoef’s paraphrase in her book

*Herman Boerhaave (1668-1738): Calvinist Chemist and Physician:*

In Pitcairne’s system, just as in Boerhaave’s early medicine, life is a result of the constant circulation of the blood caused by the motion of the heart and arteries. Moreover, all other function of the body depends upon the free flow of the blood and humours secreted from the blood through the vessels of the body. Pitcairne treated the blood like any other fluid, which meant that he adopted the general mechanical laws in order to transform the body into a hydraulic system.<sup>206</sup>

Knoef saw Boerhaave’s position much differently, however. She argued he departed from a Newtonian emphasis on forces of cause and effect; and this is captured in his concept: “thread of the warp”:

[they] cannot be produced by any cause [...] they are entwined and woven together, so as to form the foundation and support for each single body [...] growing, moving [...] and propagating itself by fruitful generation [like] the seeds of things.<sup>207</sup>

This seeming reference to what was found earlier in those “cesspools” of nature (i.e., germination), imbued with all that “negative” force, is tempered by how Knoef then relates Boerhaave’s chemistry to his Calvinist faith and the belief matter in “woven” form is still passive and in need of propulsion and maintenance by divine “energy”; and from this an apparent new “scab” forms: “creation is like God’s royal *tent* in which man can behold God”.<sup>208</sup> D’Alembert criticized those who introduced *dei ex machina* in this way, ones whose work with supranaturalism and constancy (eternity) meant only “death” and “sterility” if

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>206</sup> Rina Knoef, *Herman Boerhaave (1668-1738): Calvinist Chemist and Physician* (Amsterdam: Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, 2002), 203.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid, 194.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid, 179. (Emphasis added)



taken into the literal ground of the natural world. D'Alembert criticized Leibniz and his theory of "pre-established harmony" for this very sort of introduction, a proposal seen retroactively synchronizing the two substances in question: the "body" and the "soul", a systematic attempt d'Alembert called too optimistic and, what's more, dangerous in having that advantage of being able to explain everything<sup>209</sup> without recourse to the check of something like say "falsifiability". D'Alembert looked to Francis Bacon for the proper outlook:

Hostile to systems, [Bacon] conceived of philosophy as being only that part of our knowledge which *should contribute to making us better and happier*, thus apparently confining it with the limits of the science of *useful things*, and everywhere he recommended the study of nature.<sup>210</sup>

One of the common themes emerging out of the previous two chapters is that "positive" knowledge has always been lionized for practicality; one such measure being its viscosity in allowing "facts" to affix together and form accumulating bodies of knowledge. This could include Le Mettrie praising Claude Joseph Geoffroy for discovering plant parts to add to a developing repertoire of botanical knowledge (p. 4). In his "egg" reflection, Montaigne put it this way: "unlikeness" for legislators, judges, philosophers and theologians is of great benefit (p. 44) for with it justifications and applications come anew, adding new layers to each one's respective fields of knowledge. Foucault in *L'Archéologie du savoir* gives a modern appraisal of this tendency in mature form in disciplines of Western science, using his concept of "strategies". "Strategies are open-ended and are always measured by their degree of "formative" potential:

A discursive formation does not occupy therefore all the possible volume that is opened up to it of right by the systems of formation of its objects, its enunciations, and its concepts; it is essentially incomplete, owing to the system of formation of its strategic choices. Hence the fact that, taken up again, placed, and interpreted in a new constellation, a given discursive formation may reveal new possibilities.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> d'Alembert, op. cit., 87.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid, 75. (Emphasis added)

<sup>211</sup> Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2002), 75.

But on a more basic level, d'Alembert praises Bacon for removing the barrier between pure and mechanical sciences in his program to promote what Schwab called the “unity and interrelation of all truths, and the relationship of knowledge to society”.<sup>212</sup> What is meant by this is that the slightest of modifications of use value became the beginning of discovery, for example, something as simple as M. d'Argenville's sluice, mentioned in the encyclopaedic entry: “Gardening and Hydraulics”.<sup>213</sup> Even the smallest change, achieving better manipulation of the vagaries of water, is an extension of knowledge and perforce an augmentation of “usefulness” for humankind. This standard applies to all categories of knowledge where articulation happens only on the most recently grown branchlet from the trunk of the tree of knowledge. This could be the modification to “Masonry” in the subsection “Arts, Trades, Manufactures”; of “Uses of Nature” in the division: “Natural History”, order: “History”; or the one to “Hygiene proper” in the sub-sub-section “Hygiene” of “Medicine”; in the section: “Zoology” in the subdivision: “Particular Physics” of “Science of Nature”, order: “Philosophy”. The modification to “masonry” belongs to branch: “Memory” of d'Alembert's “Detailed System” in *Discours Préliminaire* while the modification to “hygiene proper” belongs to branch: “Reason”.<sup>214</sup> As for modifications in that third branch: “Imagination”, it is not a stretch to say Grimm's incidental “love-sickness”, mentioned in Chapter 1.3, is a modification of the “Tragic”: subdivision “Dramatic” though Rousseau would certainly have a difficult time seeing it as belonging to the division: “Sacred” of the order: “Poetry”. As mentioned earlier, Smith left room for fashion in his conception of “division of labour”: “when employed [one] should soon find out easier and readier methods of performing [one's] own particular work, whenever the nature of it admits of such improvement” (p. 49). It is these “positive” grounds: the formative (Geoffroy according to Le Mettrie; the “legislators” and “theologians”, Montaigne) and the practical (the unity of

<sup>212</sup> David N. Schwab, ‘Translator's Introduction’, op. cit., xliii-xliv.

<sup>213</sup> d'Alembert, op. cit., 132.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid, 144-45.

sciences and arts, Bacon) that Sade refused to engage. And for this reason Hunt's placement of Sade in the materialist tradition of pornography of the revolutionary period was rejected (p. 10-11) as well as the comparison between Sade's principle of seduction and that of Casanova and Fontenelle's, as Cryle put it for them: "libertinage [...] is quite simply a set of stylized moves" (p. 68). And to repeat, it follows from all these points that *desire and imagination need not even belong to the "plenum"* developed in Chapter 1.4. With the comparisons made between important principles in *Discours Préliminaire* and those of the preceding chapters it is time to begin comparing the architecture d'Alembert establishes for the *Encyclopédie* and that one Sade uses to structure his *Les 120 Journées*. Of principle concern in this comparison will be differing conceptions of "imagination" and "imitation".

D'Alembert saw "imagination" and "imitation" belonging to opposite ends of the spectrum of human understanding: "[w]e take imagination in the more noble and precise sense, as the talent of creating by imitating".<sup>215</sup> As earlier mentioned, improvements to "masonry", "hygiene proper" and "tragedy" really belong to the three branches of "Diderot's Detailed System of Human Knowledge": "memory", "reason" and "imagination", whose sequence here also constitutes for d'Alembert his order of prerogative. These three pillars support the architecture of his "system of knowledge" and d'Alembert would draw out its full explication by examining each one of these pillars individually and in relation one with the other. In a clever polemical move against his opponents amongst the mainstream scholastic philosophers of his time, d'Alembert reserves a description of the transition from "memory" to "reason" as a historical account of European civilization from the Renaissance onward. D'Alembert first establishes "memory" as the puerile first step towards understanding, it relying on only what can be "imitated" from knowledge pre-possessed, in the case of his argumentation, the rediscovery of knowledge of the Greeks and Romans at the advent of the

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<sup>215</sup> d'Alembert, op. cit., 51.

Renaissance. He argues knowledge of European civilization initially came not from the “study of nature” but of “indiscriminately devouring” what the ancients had gathered as knowledge from their study of nature.<sup>216</sup> He then set the stage to narrate how it was possible that knowledge of the classics could end up being so central to the knowledge of his society; one he claimed decidedly did not pay heed to nature at all. How was it that Aristotle could be relied upon so heavily even though his research project can not at all be said to be the same as the Scholastics, whose own project shared his namesake: Aristotelianism (?):

These circumstances gave rise to that multitude of erudite men, immersed in the learned languages to the point of disdaining their own, who knew everything in the ancients except their grace and finesse [...] They acted like great lords who do not resemble their forefathers in any real merit but who are excessively proud of their ancestry. Moreover, that vanity was not without some degree of plausibility. *The realm of erudition and of facts is inexhaustible; the effortless acquisition made in it lead one to that one's substance is continually growing, so to speak. On the contrary, the realm of reason and of discoveries is rather small.* Through study in that realm, men often succeed only in unlearning what they thought they knew, instead of learning what they did not know.<sup>217</sup>

And for the transition from “reason” to “imagination” d’Alembert shifts away from a historical approach and moves towards a formal one where he argues that whereas “reason” is laborious as it often “exhausts itself in fruitless investigation [...] is] limited to the ideas that lie before it, forced to check itself each instant”;<sup>218</sup> objects in imagination are self-generating,<sup>219</sup> from raw materials, those “objects” formed from “memory” and “reason”. This ordering is a scrambled reversal of what has been presented in this dissertation as the spectrum of “negative”-to-“positive” knowledge. “Imagination” has been assigned the formal quality, “negativity”, belonging to the same category as “relations” and “desire”, and it has been said that *it* is the impetus through which “positive” objects - or better, increasingly more “positive” ones - form. D’Alembert seems even to allude to this point when he reflects on the idea of “partial” knowledge under the influence of his highly de-sexualized regime: “curiosity”:

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid, 63.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid, 63-64. (Emphasis added)

<sup>218</sup> Ibid, 70-71.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid, 70.

[t]he mere fact that we have occasionally found concrete advantages in certain fragments of knowledge, when they were hitherto unsuspected, authorizes us to regard all investigation begun out of pure curiosity as being potentially useful to us.<sup>220</sup>

As for “memory” d’Alembert defines it as “imitation” of objects only pre-possessed, i.e., the classical knowledge in his historiographical account. The imitation of these objects he takes as inferior to the imitation of those in nature. The “imitation of Nature” was considered something very different in d’Alembert’s view as it depended on imagination and “putting together beings similar to those which are the objects of our direct ideas”, the realm of “reason”, which he argued was “highly recommended by the ancients”.<sup>221</sup>

The sceptic, David Hume argues that “uniformities of nature” offer no sufficient standard, through which to confirm the validity of truth statements about the world: any truth claim has as its basis only past experiences and gathered patterns, which all end up as “begging the question” when used to ground truth statements. And this elusiveness of truth came without him even discussing knowledge in those “obscure” forms, in the human repertoire that apparently has no bearing on anything natural at all. In this regard his critique of the idea of the “immortality of the soul” finds a common position in d’Alembert’s earlier mentioned critique of Leibniz and his “pre-established harmony”. Accordingly, in the wake of this dual epistemological failure Hume presents, the term: “uniformity of objects” seems better suited to capture discussion of both forms of imitation: those based on “obscurities” and those ones of the nature world. “Imitation” is “tropism”: a “direct turning towards (all forms of) “objects”. This term was developed in the introduction as the basis for a mode of relations characteristic of that “anteriority” phase of human development, one believed central to the period of concern. These “objects” include those that Hume and especially d’Alembert would prefer to handle separately. It should be stated that the difference that may exist between these two variants of “objects” is that the more “negative” the object be; the

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid, 37.

more residual influence from an earlier phase be present. The manner of object engagement in the “posteriority” phase, i.e., taxis as indirect engagement, (p. 30), seems to be a pattern ever present in those objects Hume and d’Alembert write off as “obscure”. Though the “posteriority-anteriority-interiority” complex has been presented as separate phases, it is in fact more of a cascading from earlier to later where what comes next in the order always contains features of what came before. And d’Alembert even alluded to this point (albeit unintentionally) when he discusses the role religion plays in his society as something not only confided to matters of faith but also the regulation of life processes, implying regimes of “nature”: “religion is intended uniquely to *regulate our mode of life* and our faith”.<sup>222</sup> However, his point is taken not as a general statement of fact but one of critical resistance as the phrase that follows is: “[the theologians] believe [religion] was to enlighten us also on the system of world”.<sup>223</sup> In light of how Boerhaave’s Calvinist faith informed his science (Knoef) or Leibniz’ “pre-established harmony” worked to unite bodies and souls, more subtle attention needs to be paid to the nature of these earlier mentioned “protrusions” into the “plenum”: the “singular fact” of d’Alembert and Cassirer’s reflection does not have the same arc as say Boerhaave’s “tent” (p. 82), the latter is imbued with a much deeper “negativity” though all the above can be reducible to that now familiar model d’Holbach presents as what is either “congenial” or “inimical” to humankind. This deeper negativity has already been explored as the terminus of Montaigne’s reflection, recapitulated in the adage: “[n]ature [as the Christian deity] always gives us happier laws than those we give ourselves” (p. 42). In *Les 120 Journées* there is presented an order of human knowledge, starting first with “imagination”, followed by “memory” (from objects natural to more obscure), with absolutely no mention of “reason”. (One would have to wait until the 1795 *La philosophie dans le boudoir*, well after the initial stages of the French Revolution, to discover an “object”

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<sup>222</sup> Ibid, 73. (Emphasis added)

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

in his oeuvre that resembles this “positive” type and this will be a principle topic in discussions in Chapter 5.1.) But what fills the “plenum” is anything but concern for what is either “congenial” or “inimical”. Sade, just as Rousseau did in the previous chapter, takes up a cosmological posture to make a very poignant monistic argument concerning how the imagination be the *fons et arigo* of all knowledge. Sade speaks through an exchange between two villains of Silling Château, who seem befuddled by the objects that pass through their purview and present the imagination as what travails them:

“[Durcet:] [...] I must declare my imagination has always outdistanced my faculties; I lack the means to do what I would do, I have conceived of a thousand time more and better than I have done, and I have ever had complaint against Nature who, while giving me the desire to outrage her, has always deprived me of the means.

“[Curval:] There are [...] but two or three crimes to perform in this world, and they, once done, there’s no more to be said; all the rest is inferior, you cease any longer to feel. Ah, how many times, by God, have I not longed to be able to assail the sun, snatch it out of the universe, make a general darkness, or use that star to burn the world! oh, that would be a crime, oh yes, and not a little misdemeanour such as are all the ones we perform who are limited in a whole year’s time to metamorphosing a dozen creatures into lumps of clay.”<sup>224</sup>

The “plenum” presented in this manner is an incremental increase in intensity of what Rousseau earlier introduced as its content: “virtue”. With Rousseau describing “virtue” as fundamentally erotic, it is now possible to see “vice” simply as its amplification. It is with “vice” that Sade fills the “plenum” of the world.

As already mentioned, the “imitation of nature” - or in d’Alembert’s words, “imitation of *la belle Nature*” - begins with clear and direct ideas only discoverable by “reason” that spring forth from “imagination” and then fully unfurl. D’Alembert uses the examples of Painting and Sculpture to sequence the following order of development. First it is reason:

Painting and Sculpture ought to be placed at the head of that knowledge which consists of imitation, because it is in those arts above all that imitation best approximates the objects represented and speaks most directly to the senses.<sup>225</sup>

He then gives imitation its push, its sweeping quality: “warmth, the movement, and the life which is capable of giving, it seems rather to create than to portray [...]”<sup>226</sup> - imagination.

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<sup>224</sup> de Sade, *120 Days*, op. cit., 364.

<sup>225</sup> d’Alembert, op. cit., 37.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid, 38.

With adjectives like “lively, vivid and pleasing”<sup>227</sup> d’Alembert gives description to the sentiment of “imitation of *la belle Nature*”; they are sentiments actually not too different than the adjectives Sade discusses though the discrepancy in degree is quite pronounced: “inflamed”, “spasmodic” and “vexed”. The objects (of reason) d’Alembert considers important as starting points for “imagination” to do its work, Sade banishes from consideration and presents “imagination” rather as a malevolent force coming up from below as if bringing with it the heat of hellfire itself. This is how the Duc formulates it - in a state of himself feeling “*warm as he fingers Zéphyr*”:<sup>228</sup>

The man who is addressing you at this very instant owed spasms to stealing, murdering, committing arson, and he is perfectly sure that it is not the object of libertine intentions, which fires us, but the idea of evil, and that consequently it is thanks only to evil and only in the name of evil one stiffens, not thanks to objects, and were this object to be divested of the power to cause us to do evil, our prick would droop, ‘twould interest us no more.<sup>229</sup>

The differences d’Alembert and Sade exhibit here are visible in the formal structures they use to organize their works. Speaking of the formal organization of the *Encyclopédie* in “Part III” of *Discours Préliminaire* d’Alembert speaks of the need to balance reader accessibility with that goal of unifying human knowledge, the latter being the stated innovation promised in Diderot’s *Prospectus*, that antecedent public relations document meant to both create a buzz of anticipation and gauge the viability of the project from the public response. The project’s editors agreed to compel all entries, arts and sciences alike, to an alphabetic arrangement regardless of pulls towards categories, those inchoate forms of disciplines. This was meant to ward off confusion of having not only multiple alphabetical orders for all the different categories of sciences or arts but also the doubling up of entries if a “number of words common to different sciences” or arts need be repeated.<sup>230</sup> What came from this format was a need to cross-reference and herein lay the unifying principle the editors had the responsibility to accomplish:

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid, 37.

<sup>228</sup> de Sade, *120 Days*, op. cit., 363. (Emphasis added)

<sup>229</sup> Ibid, 364.

<sup>230</sup> d’Alembert, op. cit., 113.



[t]he only operation in our work as editors which presumes some intelligence consists in filling the voids which separate two sciences or two arts and in linking the chain when an article which appears to belong to several areas has not been produced [...].<sup>231</sup>

D'Alembert summed up this format as sciences and arts being treated in an order of words - not ideas - which he reduced to an "object" focus: if treated in the order of ideas,

[...] the encyclopedic arrangement of the sciences and the arts would have gained little, and the encyclopedic arrangement of words, or *rather objects* through which sciences [and arts] come together and communicate with one another, would have been completely lost.<sup>232</sup>

An alphabetic beginning guaranteed an object beginning, from which it was possible to overlay matrices of cross-references to push knowledge upwards towards increasing convergence. Schwab summarized this plan as "a vehicle for advertising the virtues of co-operation among the disciplines and for the entire methodology of the Enlightenment"<sup>233</sup> and, although Schwab argued the plan ultimately failed to live up to its intended purposes, it did occasion the writers of the *Encyclopédie* opportunities to "jab" at sanctioned knowledge - and those institutions supporting it - not by a direct confrontation but a lateral one where hallowed objects say of ecclesiastical importance are desacralized by association with secular ones.<sup>234</sup>

For example, take d'Alembert's Spinozan handling of God, not from special revelation but from material requirements beginning with matter, moving up through to ideas, seamlessly, and finally ending at an all-powerful intelligence, counting as a unification of knowledge outside the purview of church doctrine and authority.<sup>235</sup> In *Les 120 Journées* Sade makes the same spirited critique of the establishment as d'Alembert does though the guiding structure is

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<sup>231</sup> Ibid, 115.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid, 113-14. (Emphasis added)

<sup>233</sup> David N. Schwab, op. cit., xlix.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid, 15. \* 'This mutual slavery [of soul and body] which is so independent of us, together with the reflections we are impelled to make on the nature of the two principles and on their imperfection, lifts us to the contemplation of an all-powerful Intelligence who is the source of what we are and who consequently requires our worship. *Our inner conviction alone would suffice to make us recognize the existence of such a being, even if the universal testimonies of other men and of all Nature were not joined with it*'. (Full quotation)

far different. On “Day Six” of Madame Duclos’ narration, the first of four narrators covering the first thirty days of November and dealing with “150 Simple Passions”,<sup>236</sup> Sade speaks of a

[...] grave and learned professor of Scholasticism at the Sorbonne who, tired of wasting his time proving the existence of God in his school [...] come[s] to [the] brothel to convince himself of the existence of his dear God’s creatures.<sup>237</sup>

Sade recounts the professor’s investment into such an erudite question this way:

He would send prior notice of his intended arrival, and Aurore would feel like one dying of hunger. Curious to see that pious colloquy, I [Duclos] fly to the spy hole: my lovers greet one another, I observe a few preliminary caresses all directed upon the mouth, then most delicately our rhetor seats his companion in a chair, seats himself opposite her and, taking her hands, deposits his relics between them, sad old vestiges they were, in the most deplorable state. “Act,” he enjoins her, “act, my lovely one. Act; you know by what means I may be drawn from this languid condition, I beg you to adopt them with all dispatch for I feel myself pressed mightily to proceed.” With one hand she fondles the doctor’s flabby tool, with the other she draws his head to hers, glues her lips to his mouth and in no time at all she has, one after another, shot sixty great belches down his gullet. Impossible to represent the ecstasy of this servant of God; he was in the clouds, he inhaled, he swallowed everything that came his way, you’d have thought the very idea of losing the least puff of air would have distressed him, and whilst all this was going on, his hands roamed inquiringly over my colleague’s breasts and under her petticoat, but these fingerings were no more than episodic; the unique and capital object was that mouth overwhelming him with sighs and digestive rumblings. His prick finally enlarged by the voluptuous vibrations the ceremony causes to be born in him, he discharged into my companion’s hand, and ran off to deliver a lecture, protesting as he went that never had he enjoyed himself more.<sup>238</sup>

This lengthy account of one of the 150 simple passions suffices to demonstrate the nature of what Sade is documenting in this manuscript, one often misleadingly linked with the *Encyclopédie*. In his preamble to the work Sade directly contradicts d’Alembert’s aim in *Discours Préliminaire*, i.e., a unification of knowledge from clearly delineated alphabetic objects. Sade presents rather the risk of his passions appearing too unified on first glance, compelling a need for differentiation:

[...] study closely that passion which to your first consideration seems perfectly to resemble another, and you will see that a difference does exist and that, however slight it may be, it possesses precisely that [libertine] refinement.<sup>239</sup>

Next in line after this professor from Sorbonne was a gentleman, who preferred his brothel hireling to drink an emetic before his arrival so she could vomit in his mouth to initiate his orgasm. All the details that go into each vignette of passion are designed for divergence - not

<sup>236</sup> The first of four parts is titled: ‘The 150 Simple Passions, Or Those Belonging To The First Class, Composing The Thirty Days Of November Passed In Hearing The Narration of Madame Duclos; Interspersed Amongst Which Are The Scandalous Doings At The Château During That Month; All Being Set Down In The Form of A Journal’.

<sup>237</sup> de Sade, *120 Days*, op. cit., 335.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid, 254.

convergence as is the case for d'Alembert - and Duclos gets a tongue lashing from her hosts whenever she fails on details of divergence:

'Duclos,' the Président interrupted at this point, 'we have, I believe, advised you that your narration must be decorated with the most numerous and searching details; this precise way and extent to which we may judge how the passion you describe relates to human manners and man's character [...] I have not the faintest notion of your second monk's prick, nor any idea of its discharge, In addition did he frig your cunt, pray tell, and did he have you dandle his device? You see what I mean by neglected details.'<sup>240</sup>

This perpetual divergence guarantees objects be only as good as the scenery where the imagination glides on past onto the next view until arriving at what constitutes the singular passion. Where it ends is in fact at the selection from the "banquet" that Duclos offers her listeners, who take and leave as they please. Sade is offering of course these same options to his readers. And as stated earlier, the "elliptic" limit, barricaded in the "imagination" of the beholder, is the guarantee that any search for unity be futile. And for the professor, the right brothel, the right girl with the precise taste in belches, the right foreplay, the right chair and position vis-à-vis the girl's chair, the right quantity of belches... is the endless contingency bleeding into the next one on all sides: *ad initio*, the professor's constitution; mood; age; quality of his prick; level of stress; formation of his ideas...; or *in medias res*, the pressure of how Aurore glues herself to his lips; the duration, timbre and magnitude of the belches and the sequence and variety of their occurrence, etc.. Sade is overly ambitious in how he promises to arrange his passions for the ease of the reader:

But as some reader not much learned in these matters might perhaps confuse the designated passions with the adventure or simple event in the narrator's life, each of these passions has been carefully distinguished by a marginal notation: a line, above which is the title that may be given the passion. This mark indicates the exact place where the account of the passion begins, and the end of the paragraph always indicates where it finishes.<sup>241</sup>

It would seem that Klossowski in *Sade Mon Prochain* assumed Sade adequately achieved this stated aim, i.e., to build from simple to increasing complexity those passions as "specific *fixed idea[s]*".<sup>242</sup> Klossowski attributes these passions to that species: the "pervert", whose "desire is sated only in the scrupulous taste for, and search, a detail, sated only in a gesture

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<sup>240</sup> Ibid, 271.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid, 254-55.

<sup>242</sup> Pierre Klossowski, op. cit., 22.

that advances scrupulously to this detail” and notably he related this “fixed idea” to that “positive” object of psychopathology discussed earlier in reference to Bloch christening *Les 120 Journées*; Klossowski called this “idea” a “mania”.<sup>243</sup> But as Schwab pointed out the failings of the editors of the *Encyclopédie* to adequately fill in the gaps in knowledge with some unifying notation as d’Alembert promised, in all translations of *Les 120 Journées* since Maurice Heine’s inaugural one and Pauvert’s first for a wider audience, it would seem that Sade too did not live up to the promised notation laid out in the introduction:

[t]his mark indicates the exact place where the account of the passion begins, and the end of the paragraph always indicates where it finishes.<sup>244</sup>

No such “marks” were ever found in Sade’s original text. Or he soon recognized on setting forth that such “positive” delineations of passions go against the formal argument he is making in how he arranges his work, a fortiori, his monistic argument. Cesspools so much of interest in the beginning of this chapter find new sources for monistic consideration in reflection on the tastes of these peculiar subjects like this professor of Scholasticism; but all of what happens at Silling Château presents this “negative” vision. It is to the goings-on in Silling Château that we now turn.

### 2.3 The Almanac of *Les 120 Journées* and the “Metaphysics of Failure”

If Warman sets *Les 120 Journées* at the beginning of Sade’s literary journey to set fact and analysis on a “literal” course towards systematization, St-Martin, in her chapter “Inflation Romanesque: Maladies Inflammatoire Aiguës et Fièvres”, offers an organizational scheme much different, one in the form of a timeline based on the lifespan of an illness starting from the “chronic” pangs in its initial stages slowly crescendoing to that full-blown breakout with all its acuity. She situates *Les 120 Journées* at the chronic onset, while anticipating *Justine* to be the acute climax:

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> de Sade, *120 Days*, op. cit., 255.

[...] le-cul-de-sac des *Cent Vingt Journées*, sa chronicité, trouve sa résolution critique dans le foudroiement de Justine.<sup>245</sup>

Compliments given earlier, St-Martin is insightful in proffering to the evolution of Sade's oeuvre something of a "negative" arc, the "maladie inflammatoire" coming from a source that can only resemble one of those cesspools of previous discussions. Appropriately, she references Bordeu, that scientist of Sade's generation, who offered up scientific reflections conscious of the need to include "negativity". Here Bordeu depicts the "negative" form an illness like a fever takes from beginning to the final culmination:

Si l'on examine bien l'action qu'ont les poches du tissu cellulaire, respectivement les unes sur les autres, il sera facile de concevoir cette chaîne de compressions morbides dont nous parlons, qui se font du dedans au dehors, et du péritoine et de la plèvre vers la tête, la surface du corps et ses extrémités; surtout si on se rappelle la distribution des nerfs et les sympathies qui en naissent.<sup>246</sup>

But St-Martin restricts Sade too tightly to the science of his day in reducing his case to one fashionable idea of biology. This raises the spectre of what has been shown as dallying with "positive" objects of science exposing Sade to the criticism of contradiction, for example, his treatment of "épigenèse" in the previous chapter. It also obfuscates Sade's wider project stated as showing that "objects" of science have a history. This is why that "complex" of "negative-to-positive" objects has been set up as an alternative "system" to organize both Sade's ideas and how they unfold within the evolution of his oeuvre. This section will argue how it is that *Les 120 Journées* is a deeply "negative" work and, what's more, one whose "negativity" matches that of the historical conditions of his time, sitting in the Bastille on the eve of the French Revolution. Although presented in narrow historical terms, the "negative" structure St-Martin engages: "maladie longue" is deployable in this dissertation for novel and far-reaching affect. In the following quotation, she reintroduces that problematic association with the *Encyclopédie* but then goes on to adumbrate a "negative" structure (taken of course as the life cycle of an illness) that will be workable for the argument being made in this section:

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<sup>245</sup> Armelle St-Martin, *De la médecine chez Sade*, op. cit., 366.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid, 365.

S'il fallait associer, d'un point de vue structural, Les Cent Vingt Journées à un type particulier de maladie, il faudrait se tourner vers la maladie chronique. Cette dernière est caractérisée, d'après l'Encyclopédie, par sa lenteur: "ainsi, on distingue des maladies longues, chroniques, dont le mouvement se fait lentement". Les Cent Vingt Journées, qui jouent sur la répétition et la prévisibilité, coïncident avec la marche de la maladie chronique. La régularité de la structure de l'Ecole du libertinage, qui donne invariablement lieu à des répétitions, à des retours, fait que cette œuvre se compare davantage à une évolution lente et cyclique, qui est la marque principale de la maladie chronique. Ainsi, dans Les Cent Vingt Journées, le rythme de la narration des historiennes (comme celui de la maladie chronique est peu rapide), car brisé systématiquement par la rigidité d'un programme parallèle (horaires de repas, changements d'historiennes, fêtes).<sup>247</sup>

*Les 120 Journées* reads more like the predecessor to the encyclopedia, that quaint literary relic of bygone times: the almanac.

Almanacs have always come in forms with varying degrees of emphases depending on the nationalities and cultural interests of the target audience. In the introduction to her exploration of almanacs in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe in *Populäre Kalenderim vorindustriellen Europa: Der "Hinkende Boten"/ "Messenger boiteux"* Susanne Greulich gives a breakdown of the basic structure of this then popular genre of reading material:

Neben einem 24-seitigen Kalender, der neben den Wochen- auch die Namens- und Festtage auflistete und ableitend vom Stand der Sterne sowie der Erscheinung des Mondes Vorhersagen über das Wetter traf, enthielten die Almanache einen in den französischen Ausgaben ‚Ephémérides‘ genannten Teil, der Fruchtbarkeit der Erde, zu Kreig und kommonden Krankheiten anstellte.<sup>248</sup>

The content of almanacs was based on "common sense", i.e., the otherwise fortuitousness of say a royal birth, the appointment of a new cardinal or an auspicious sign for a good crop yield all counted as knowledge that relied on either traditions or popular wisdom - and notably not on "facts" as would serve as knowledge in encyclopaedias. The defence of "common sense" would be taken up by philosophers like Thomas Reid, whom Arthur Schopenhauer would later praise for his:

[W]iderleg[ung der] Lockesche Lehre, daß die Anschauung ein Produkt der Sinne sei, indem er gründlich und scharfsinnig darthut, daß sämtliche Sinnesempfindungen nicht die mindeste Aehnlichkeit haben mit der anschaulich erkannte Welt.<sup>249</sup>

<sup>247</sup> Armelle St-Martin, op. cit., 364.

<sup>248</sup> Susanne Greulich, *Populäre Kalenderim vorindustriellen Europa: Der 'Hinkende Boten' / 'Messenger boiteux'* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co., 2006), 20.

<sup>249</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, 'Zur Lehre von der anschauenden, oder Verstandes-Erkenntniß' (Kapital 2), *Die Welt als Willen und Vorstellen* (Zürich: Arthur Schopenhauer. Zürcher Ausgabe, 1977), Paragraph 4. \* Schopenhauer would go on to assail those 'five primary qualities': extension, shape, solidity, movement and number, whose inherent 'positivity' should be seen as the primary target.

Reid developed his idea of “sensus communis” as an antidote to Hume’s scepticism that had already rendered much of popular wisdom and age-old beliefs illegitimately grounded. But Hume also extended this line of attack to perceptions in the natural world, of whose derivative truth-claims he argued were only as strong as the “uniformities” strung together from experiences. Both these epistemological arcs have been shown earlier to possess a salient “negativity” of relations where subjects both face objects straight on (tropism) and follow circular paths toward others (taxis) the only difference being the degree of “negativity” and “positivity” of those object pursued: the former, “natural”, those ones for which d’Alembert saw the greatest possibility for scientificity (“imitation of nature”); the latter, “obscure” objects, derogatorily lumped into those categories of superstition or religious mindedness (the form of “imitation of nature”, to which d’Alembert objected). The almanac captures the “negativity” of relations of these “negative-to-positive” objects, something ultimately frozen out of encyclopaedic projects. As for the debate between Hume and Reid, it was a matter of respective prioritization of these objects, ones either more “positive” or “negative”. In their reflections on eighteenth-century philosophy in their psychology essay, “Reality Monitoring” Marcia K. Johnson and Carol L. Raye sum up nicely these two very different positions:

Two general lines of thought have been that perception and imagination primarily differ in that precepts are stronger or more vivid [Hume] and the opposing idea that ‘sensation... and imagination, even where they have the same object, are operations of quite a different nature, and perfectly distinguishable by those who are sound and sober [Reid]’.<sup>250</sup>

The manner almanacs trace “uniformities of nature”: the changing of the seasons, the lunar and ecliptic cycles, the periodicity of the rising and setting of the sun - those ones Hume so deftly deployed to the effect of injecting such a pall of confidence over the whole of the philosophical project - is far more transparent than those “uniformities” of “obscure” objects Reid would reserve for the “imagination”: signs of the zodiac, royal and ecclesiastic

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<sup>250</sup> Marcia K. Johnson, Carole L. Raye, ‘Reality Monitoring’ in *Psychological Review*, Vol. 88, No. 1, 1981, 69.

“watching” and holidays. In *Enquiry in to the Human Mind* Reid speaks of the speed those objects of Hume’s concern: precepts pass from sight to what they actually are (the things signified) “leaving no footsteps in memory or imagination”.<sup>251</sup> He uses the micro-cosmology of his own room to emphasize this point:

[...] the visible appearance of things in my room varies almost every hour depending on whether the day is clear or cloudy, whether the sun is in the east or south or west, whether my eye is in one part of the room or in another; but I never think about these variations as anything but signs of a clear or cloudy sky or of morning, noon, or night.<sup>252</sup>

For him it was those with sufficient “passion and affection” to channel the magnitudes of what he called signs of the “language of nature”, those ones outside that daze of artificiality plaguing many of Reid’s contemporaries, Hume included. For Reid it was children, artists, the *hoi pollio*, the blind, who could reach beyond the pale of appearances and ascertain the “force and energy of language”;<sup>253</sup> and concerning the last on this list Reid asked this penetrating question:

[h]ow a sighted man detects so many things by means of the eye is as unintelligible to the blind as how a man can be inspired with knowledge by God is unintelligible to us. Should this lead the blind man to dismiss as fraudulent all claims to be able to see [...] (?).<sup>254</sup>

The quality Sade investigates in *Les 120 Journées* is really the magnitude of these “negative” objects and the expanse of the “imagination” that gives access. The tone Sade takes is much more amplified than Reid’s but even much more so than that one presented in all tranquillity in the landscape architecture Rousseau establishes at Clarens estates in *La nouvelle Héloïse*, that estate run by that “insensitive” figure, Wolmar. Linking almanacs and Rousseau’s work here is not too far-fetched especially given the dual emphases on “folksy” common sense and the natural rhythms of agrarian lifestyles and digestion (e.g., the proper diet for Julie) to whose uniformity Wolmar calibrated his prescription of moral hygiene. If there is any

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<sup>251</sup> Thomas Reid, *An Inquiry in the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 52.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid. 51.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid, 52.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.



ambiguity here in this comparison, Sade makes it crystal clear. *Les 120 Journées* is an almanac.

If Sade had been that eminent editor of the *Almanach Royal* - that producer of royal commissioned editions since Laurent D'Houry's first in 1684 - he would have been ten days late submitting his final draft in writing but at least he managed the right month. Sade began his final draft on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October, 1785, completing on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November, twenty days later; and as is the common statement in the "Avis de L'éditeur" at the beginning of each edition since D'Houry:

[I]es personnes qui prennent part à cet Ouvrage, sont priées d'envoyer leur Instructions ou Observations avant les dix premier jours du mois d'Octobre.<sup>255</sup>

This almanac connection has been one interpretative device, neglected amongst others that always want to frame *Les 120 Journées* as something of an encyclopaedic project (as juxtapositions with Krafft-Ebing and d'Alembert have shown); and, furthermore, one incomplete on account of the final three parts after Madame Duclos' full narration of the "150 Simple Passions" being written only cursorily in list form, these three parts being of course the narration of Madame Champville, and the "150 Complex Passions"; Madame Martaine, the "150 Criminal Passions"; and, finally, Madame Desgrange, the "150 Murderous Passions". Neil Schaeffer gives one interpretation to the incompleteness to this work, one aesthetic, playing on the subjectivity of Sade, the author. Characterizing Duclos as a guide who reassures readers along the way with her comparative "narrative skill, some humor and often humanity",<sup>256</sup> Schaeffer describes with what readers have to contend in the second, third and fourth narrations when such a narrator is absent:

[...] when the reader is left entirely on his own, he finds himself in what will progressively become a bare, unconsoling, nightmare landscape of horror [...] no literary device could more powerfully suggest the dreadful loneliness and interiority of Sade's vision.<sup>257</sup>

<sup>255</sup> *Almanach Royal* (Paris: D'Imprimerie de le Breton Imprimeur Ordinaire du Roy, 1782), 3.

<sup>256</sup> Neil Schaeffer, op. cit., 361.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

With an almanac as an organizing principle, Sade would need only write one part for the logic of the entire work to be established as much of what almanacs consist anyways are lists of details under lapidary headings. The final three parts appearing incomplete is thus a moot point. On closely comparing *Les 120 Journées* and the *Almanach Royal*, the “almanac” as an organizing principle does seem convincing especially in the portending descriptions of seasons and the painstaking effort to itemize in the manner of a logician all the different administrative functionaries of French society - both within seven years of the start of the French Revolution. It had been the tradition since D’Houry to embed ominousness in the four months overlapping those with which Sade outlined his work. November, the month marking this beginning of *Les 120 Journées*’ daily tabulations, is presented in *Almanach Royal* with an allegory referencing in Latin an arrival: “novem ab imbre”, the month marking the ninth calendric placement since the previous winter, along with the woeful adjunct by the Roman emperor Commode who wants to hold winter’s inevitable arrival: “L’Empereur Commode essaya vainement de changer son nom & celui de Decembre”.<sup>258</sup> November, a cardinal successor of September: “le septieme après les neiges”,<sup>259</sup> must then also have such a “snowy” reference, one even given special recognition on “The Fourteen Day” when Sade follows up on that absolute barricade in his initial geographic description of Silling Chateau.<sup>260</sup> On the

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<sup>258</sup> *Almanach Royal*, op. cit., 28.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid*, 24.

<sup>260</sup> de Sade, *120 Days*, op. cit., 236-37. \* ‘Having passed the village, you begin to scale a mountain almost as high as St-Bernard and infinitely more difficult to ascend, for the only way to reach the summit is by foot; not that the route is forbidden to pack mules, but such are the precipices which everywhere border the one so very narrow path that must be followed, that you run the greatest danger if you ride; six of the mules used to transport supplies and food perished, taking with them two laborers who had thought to mount astride them. Five full hours are required to reach the top of the mountain, and there you come upon another extraordinary feature which owing to the precaution that had been taken, became a new barrier so insurmountable that none but the birds might have overcome it: the topographical accident we refer to is a crevice above sixty yards wide which splits the crest into northern and southern parts, with the result that, having climbed up the mountain, it is impossible to without great skill, to go back down it. Durcet had united these two parts, between which a precipice fell to the depth of a thousand feet and more, by a fine wooden bridge which was destroyed immediately the last of the crew had arrived, and from this moment on, all possible communication with the Château of Silling ceased. For, cross the bridge and you come down into a little plain about four acres in area; the plain is surrounded on all sides by a sheer crag rising to the clouds, crags which envelope the plain with a faultless screen [...] the bridge removed or destroyed, there is not on this entire earth a single being, of no matter what species you may imagine, capable of gaining this small plot of level land.’ (Full quotation)

fourteenth of November the residents awake to a portending event either auspicious or dire depending on the residents' proclivities:

It was discovered upon that day that the weather had lent its approval to our libertines; infamous enterprises, and had removed them to an even greater distance from the probability they would be spied upon by mortal eyes; an immense blanket of snow had fallen, it filled the surrounding vale, seeming to forbid even to wild beasts access to our scoundrel's retreat; of all human beings, there was not one that existed who could dare hope to reach where they lay fast. Ah, it is not readily to be imagined how much voluptuousness, lust, fierce joy are flattered by those sureties, or what is meant when one is able to say to oneself: "I am alone here, I am at the world's end, withheld from every gaze, here no one can reach me, there is not creature that can come nigh where I am; no limits, hence, no barriers, I am free".<sup>261</sup>

As for the month rounding out not only the narrative of *Les 120 Journées* but also winter's long stay: February, its allegorization in the *Almanach Royal* can be seen as an omen for the events that would take place under Madame Desgranges' watchful eye in the final instalment of the "150 Passions", for which she is responsible. This month, according to the *Almanach Royal*, originates from the Latin word: Februarius "qui signifié purifier & faire des expiations, ce qui se pratiquoit pendant douze jours".<sup>262</sup> The index of the murderous passions Desgranges speaks of comes by way of lists of "sacrificed" including wives, sultanas, bardashes, and fuckers along with all those young maidens and youths kidnapped in the antecedent to the story's beginning. Sade tabulates this list as a "Final Assessment" including even those who would survive:

Massacred prior to the 1 <sup>st</sup> of March,	
In the course of the orgies .....	10
Massacred after the 1 <sup>st</sup> of March .....	20
Survived and came back .....	<u>16</u>
Total .....	46 <sup>263</sup>

Of course as the "Final Assessment" includes twenty more "sacrifices" in March, committed beyond the final day of February; none of them were mediated by that tradition involving formal narrations and the audience participating in ceremonies as if according to liturgical obeisance. The sense from March 1<sup>st</sup> onwards is one of disposing of the bootie for the sake of

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<sup>261</sup> Ibid, 412.

<sup>262</sup> *Almanach Royal*, op. cit., 10.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid, 672.

convenience as the coming of spring and the need to retreat homeward posed obvious logistical issues.<sup>264</sup>

The allegory for February happens also to conjure up that cesspool of “negativity”, St-Martin mentioned in the onset of this section, that one stated as the foundation of Sade’s monistic musing:

Februaire vient aussi de Februus, ancien Dieu des morts, & pere de Pluton; peut-être de-là febris, fièvre, maladie qui envoie tant de sujets à ce Dieu.<sup>265</sup>

Here February is not simply presented as a time of year, an arbitrary temporal marker on a calendar per se; but shown possessing its own vitalism, tended to even by personifications of the zodiac, i.e., the attendant “Taureau” and “Bélier”; and imbued with the quality of having its own “genesis” and duration. The first line of the “Époques pour l’Année 1782” suggest just where this beginning may have been: “[o]n compte depuis la création du Monde jusqu’au Déluge universel [...] 1658 ans”.<sup>266</sup> Here is another instance where “fever” need not be read so closely to science of Sade’s days as St-Martin intimates. In fact, on closer analysis, the science St-Martin speaks of is often far too tightly anchored to the “positivity” of individual bodies. Consider in the following citation how easy it is to slip into discussions of characters mutually defined by their “positive” roles:

Les symptômes de la fièvre établissent des frontières nettes entre la *victim et le bourreau*. En effet, seul ce dernier éprouve constamment une élévation de sa température corporelle. La diversité du symptôme de la pyrexia, leur richesse métaphorique montrent que Sade s’est plu à traduire en images ce qui peut n’être qu’une banale manifestation pathologique [...] il emploie les termes d’échauffement pour traduire la montée du plaisir chez le

<sup>264</sup> de Sade, *120 Days*, op. cit., 670. \* ‘Upon the 1<sup>st</sup> day of March, remarking that the snows have not yet melted, Messieurs decide to dispatch the rest of the subjects one by one. Messieurs devise new arrangements whereby to keep their bedchambers staffed, and agree to give a green ribbon to everyone whom they propose to take back with them to France; the green favour bestowed, however, upon condition the recipient is willing to lend a hand with the destruction of the other victims.’ (Full quotation)

<sup>265</sup> *Almanach Royal*, op. cit., 10.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid, 5. \* ‘On compte depuis la création du Monde jusqu’au Déluge universel, . . . . . 1658 ans.

Jusqu’à la venue de JESUS-CHRIST, . . . . . 4002 ans.

Jusqu’à l’origine de la Monarchie Française, . . . . . 4422 ans.

Jusqu’à la correction du Calendrier Grégorien, . . . . . 4583 ans.

Jusqu’à present, . . . . . 5782 ans.

Et du Regne de Louis seizieme du nom, Roi de France & France & de Navarre, la huitieme année, à commencer du 10 Mai 1774.’ (Full quotation)

*libertin*; ce terme donne naissance à des derives sémantique tel que *flamme*, *chaleur*, *rougeur*. À ce niveau précis, Sade semble accentuer une conception chimiste du corps humain.<sup>267</sup>

But need not “la création” et “Déluge universal” be spoken of with terms like “fièvre” without finding “positive” conduits to house their meaning? Perhaps the answer implied here is an extension of the critique of those holding too tightly to a hermeneutic of *sola scriptura*: those who take the words of Holy Scriptures literally. Here now it is the literality of meaning that is being bypassed; and the “form” literality takes that becomes the new target: the dismantling of words imbued with “positivity” in sacred texts. The “Déluge” is the ultimate miasma without the event even being in the “form” of an event let alone having content in meaning like say something metaphoric. It is the “corruption” of the world that brought about the “inflation” of its waters without this string of nouns need being conduits for holding “positive” meaning in objects. This concern for “negativity” should figure central to the hermeneutics of all sacred texts actually.

Such a line of approach also implicates those functionaries mentioned *ad nauseum* in both *Les 120 Journées* and the *Almanach Royal*, all of whom are given the mention and concern only the most micro-managing of bureaucrats could muster - in St-Martin’s aforementioned words: “[l]a diversité du sympôme de la pyrexia [...] qui peut n’être qu’une banale manifestation pathologique”. But, of course, the “negative” backdrop from which all of them fall has already been given a thorough working-through in the development of the “plenum”; for the sake of convenience, these two quick reminders of its architecture suffice as summaries of what is denigrated in “positive” form: “Rousseau builds his “General Will” out of passion occupying the distal space Hume actually reserves for “comparisons”” (p. 55) and “Diderot took too astute notice of the vagaries of beehives and like Rousseau intuited a reactivity of deep-seated eroticism; however, Diderot set his gaze first upon individual worker bees and worked his way up to an organizing logic, i.e., the queen” (p. 58). With the

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<sup>267</sup> Armelle St-Martin, op. cit., 383. (Emphasis added)

“positive anchor to individual bodies” removed from consideration it is possible to look anew on the profuse itemizations dedicated to all those high- and multi-level bureaucratic functions, around which the worlds of D’houry and Sade turn. Once the course for all (observable) cosmological occurrences are accounted for and measured for the year in question, the *Almanach Royal* descends only by degree to those ones making the comprehensive lists of the whole of the administrative organ of the French kingdom. Starting from the most deeply “negative”: “Naissances et Alliances Des Roi, et Principaux Princes et Princesses de l’Europe de France”, “Cardinaux qui composent le sacré Collège Cardinaux évêques” and “Le Clerge: Archevêque et évêchés, leur taxe en Cour de Rome en Revenu”, the lists quickly fall in descending order to that panoply of supporting functionaries adjuncted with the pertinent titles and addresses, whose painstaking individual mention is enough to give the impression it be strictly a bureaucratic exercise. Maison de Roi; Maison de Reine; Maréchaux de France; Lieutenons Généraux des Armées du Roi; Gouvernement du Château Royale de la Bastille; Chambre de Comptes; Avocats du Parlement; Inspecteur de Police; Académie Royale des Science; Directeur des Fermes etc. are examples of some of the functionaries given special dedication in the *Almanach Royal*. The indispensability of *Les 120 Journées* is that Sade too is as particular in naming these functionaries and offering up their details. However, it is not in the manner of Diderot working up to an “organizing logic” in his observations of the goings-on of a beehive that such detailed lists in the *Almanach Royal* find their analogy. Sade is working from the same distance Rousseau has already been shown developing his metaphysical position that one imbued with “reactivity with a deep-seated eroticism”: the “plenum”. But again the “plenum” here is not filled with “virtue” as it is with Rousseau; but “vice”. In the following quotation from his introduction to *Les 120 Journées*, Sade crystallizes his departure from the contents of Rousseau’s “plenum” this way:

For - and why not say so in passing - if crime lacks the kind of delicacy one finds in virtue, is not the former always more sublime, does it not unfailingly have the character of grandeur and sublimity which surpasses, and will always make it preferable to, the monotonous and lacklustre charms of virtue? Will you protest the greatest

usefulness of this or of that, is it for us to scan Nature's laws, ours to determine whether, vice being just as necessary to Nature as is virtue, she perhaps does not implant in us, in equal quantity, the penchant for one or the other, depending on her respective needs?<sup>268</sup>

Sade takes the length of *Les 120 Journées* to itemize the same administrative organ D'houry and his successors did since the *Almanac Royal's* maiden publication. Through the infamies of either of those four principle "heroes" of the work: a duke, a bishop, a président in the French court and a financier; or all those other characterizations, bedaubing the narrations of all four of the story-tellers, the functionaries are treated with the same devotion as an almanac but of course the "negativity" of what otherwise saturates its deceptively "positive" appearance is laid bare and the "monotony" betraying for "virtue" its inevitable slide towards "positivity" (i.e., d'Holbach's "congenial-inimical formulation") is undone by "Nature" and its bestowal of vice, but this bestowal does not come in "equal quantities", as the above quotation points out. After all, in his reflection on why one would choose an "aged, ugly and even stinking crone" over a "fresh and pretty girl" Sade naturalizes the flaw and inherent "positivity" of virtue in considering how "a man on his promenade prefers the mountains arid and rugged terrain to monotonous pathways of the plains".<sup>269</sup> The following three examples suffice to illustrate Sade offering up almanac entries for three functionaries of the administrative organ *Almanach Royal* would too have described:

My hero was an elderly ecclesiastic who served as *chaplain to the king* [...] he was only approached if one where naked, but one's front and breasts had to be thoroughly covered [...] were he to catch the least glimpse of those parts, it would prove a heavy misfortune, I'd never be able to get him to discharge [...].<sup>270</sup>

The first purchaser to arrive was an old *treasurer of the Exchequer* [...] I gave him little Lucile, over whom he waxed very enthusiastic. His habitual mania, quite as filthy as disagreeable for his partner, consisted in shitting upon his Dulcinea's face, of smearing his excrement over all her features, and then of kissing her in this state, and of sucking her [...] he discharged upon her belly as he lay kissing and licking his disgusting performance.<sup>271</sup>

And having given notice of the hour of the visit, and advised me of the ritual to be expected by that elderly *post-office commissioner* whose name, I remember, was Monsieur de Grancourt [...] Our man listened with the keenest attention to my harangue [about the Parliament delegating me to arrest and punish him], and immediately I had done that, he burst into and fell down on his knees before me, imploring me to deal leniently with him [...] into the fire I had thrust the an iron scourge garnished with pointed steel tips [...] start[ed] to beat him with it, gently at first, then with increasing severity, then with all my strength, and that heedless of where

<sup>268</sup> de Sade, *120 Days*, op. cit., 197.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid, 233.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid, 376. (Emphasis added)

<sup>271</sup> Ibid, 428. (Emphasis added)

my blows fell, rending him from the nape of the neck to his heels, I had my man streaming blood in an instant [...].<sup>272</sup>

To close out discussion on *Les 120 Journées*, that most singular of pre-revolutionary almanacs, something by way of “metaphysics of failure” at the very heart of the work needs considering; and it is to this conceptualization that we now turn with the aid of these three aforementioned strategically selected almanac entries.

Failure does not mean here some personal deficiency on the part of Sade, the writer; but one that will be shown to be reflected in the investments of all four heroes, who are metronomes of the work’s escalating tempo moving in “negative” recession. This failure also comes by way of the medium of the almanac itself. With the French Revolution, the *Almanach Royal* would fall into disrepute and be discontinued, replaced with a new version, the *Almanach National*. The editors of this almanac struggled to maintain the contradictory aims of encouraging continuity with what it had just replaced while attempting a cosmological renewal with the newly enshrined “citizen-in-arms” as the centre. Richard Taws’ in his essay “Material Futures: Reproducing Revolution in P.-L. Debucourt’s *Almanach National*” offers the very different position of this new centre, one where “negativity” is replaced by something saliently “positive”. Taws’ focus on print - what its materiality was and how it mediated an entirely new public discourse - is another reminder that “desire” and “imagination” need not belong in the plenum (p. 85):

Almanack national is a work that functions as a condensed mediation on the nature of materiality and representation in Revolutionary France, at a moment when debates about such subjects were becoming increasingly significant. It asks what kind of medium is appropriate to revolution, and at what stage in its development, thereby portraying the Revolution as embedded in historical process and projecting *imaginatively* ahead toward its future life.<sup>273</sup>

In addition to these failures another is the fact that this work never saw the light of day in Sade’s time; this may help explain why Sade never made any attempt to write anew this clandestine manuscript. It is commonly said that Sade recaptured the spirit of *Les 120*

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<sup>272</sup> Ibid, 502-03. (Emphasis added)

<sup>273</sup> Richard Taws, ‘Material Futures: Reproducing Revolution in P.-L. Debucourt’s *Almanach National*’, *The Art Bulletin* 92, no. 3, 2010, 1. (Emphasis added)



*Journées* in subsequent works like *Justine* and *Juliette* but given how this dissertation has emphasized the historical and intellectual conditions of his oeuvre, this claim is now problematic. Sade even suggests as much when he woefully stated:

[...] —my manuscripts over whose loss I shed tears of blood! Other beds, tables, chests of drawers can be found, but ideas once gone are not found again.<sup>274</sup>

This point is missed by Lély, who carries on a belief disseminated earlier on by one of Sade's first biographers, Maurice Heine:

Losing his *120 Days* [...] Sade lost his main thread, and knew it. The remainder of his literary life was dominated by concern to remedy the consequences of that accident. So with painful perseverance and insistence he went on striving to attain the mastery which was his when at the height of his solitude and misanthropy.<sup>275</sup>

The above selection of the functionaries for Sade's almanac entries: the chaplain to the King, the treasurer of the Exchequer and the post-office commissioner offers variations of differing degrees of failure that will be discussed in the final part of this section. Understanding the nature of these failures will be useful in beginning to turn the corner in discussing "objects" in a new way and moving incrementally towards success. The French Revolution was a seminal period in the history of Western history, one where a new order of knowledge appeared, one of whose far-reaching explication Foucault dedicated the rump of his intellectual investment in *Les Mots et les Choses*. The transitory features of change are reflected in Sade's evolving oeuvre. But before this can be demonstrated, the metaphysics of failure needs explaining and the features of this explanation ultimately explain why the almanac is now only considered a quaint repository of human knowledge.

As it was for Charnes in Rousseau's *La nouvelle Héloïse*, Silling Chateau was run by an "insensitive" manager - or rather four of them: Duc de Blangis, Bishop of X\*\*\*, Présidente de Curval and Durcet. In developing his particular style of materialism Rousseau relied heavily on the character of Wolmar to rein in the unbounded "sensibilité" of Julie; it was common sense and bodily calibrations aimed at synchronization with natural processes

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<sup>274</sup> Austryn Wainhouse and Richard Seaver quoting Sade in their preamble to *120 Days*. (Ibid, 185)

<sup>275</sup> Gilbert Lély, op. cit., 306.

that allowed Julie first to settle and then be raised to the centre of life for the community. These qualities are all features of the epistemology of the almanac as per previous discussions. It was pointed out earlier that the organization of the terms of Rousseau's argument contained a contradiction: "if Julie be the *fons et origo* of life in Clarnes, how does it follow that it is impassive objects, embodied by this "folksy" Wolmar" (p. 51) that are the actual bases? This contradiction was solved by not seeing the objects of concern as either "sensitive" or "insensitive" but rather lying along a slide rule of "negativity-positivity", free from the burden imposed by logic that can only ever operate in "positivity". But there is now available a more subtle conceptualization: a "posteriority-anteriority-interiority" complex: relations to objects are attenuated from indirect (taxis) to increasingly direct (tropism) and internalized (interiority). ("Interiority" will begin to be developed starting from Chapter 3.1.) The position, from which to interrelate objects of say Julie's "sensibilité" and the "negative" objects Wolmar arranges for her, is the "plenum" - a location spurning proximity, the customary position for examining relations amongst objects (Hobbes, p. 54/ Hume, p. 55 / Diderot, p. 58). Rousseau instead chooses a basis point more distal, encapsulated in his notion of "volonté générale" (p. 59). This, of course, has been all in addition to the other goal set by this dissertation: the purging of observations of that other "partial" variety, i.e., d'Holbach warning of judgments that fall to the side of either being "congenial" or "inimical" to humankind. Sade used "vice" to shellac Rousseau's metaphysics on this point, presenting "virtue" as both a landscape of "positivity": "prefer[ing] the mountains' arid and rugged terrain to monotonous pathways of the plains" (p. 105), and the pinnacle of "congeniality" - what is morally good, or "hygienic". But for Sade "vice" too need not necessarily be a choice of the inimical for the sake of what is inimical. Klossowski explores this problem in his notion of "apathy":

[... f]or the monster to progress beyond the level that has been reached, he has first to avoid falling back shy of it; he can do so only if he reiterates his act in absolute apathy [... here] Sade introduced a critique of the

sensuous, and especially a critique of the primary benefit of transgression - the pleasure inescapable from the act.<sup>276</sup>

The risk for transgression is that the push against objects, naturally finds complacency and torpor, settling on what in fact becomes “congenial” to the individual in question: for Klossowski “apathy” is needed to fend off this possibility and maintain forward momentum.<sup>277</sup> The manner insensitivity has been developed in this dissertation sets it apart from Klossowski’s “apathy” in that the former has a “negativity” setting itself outside even being a choice of either what is “congenial” or “inimical”. (Apathy will be shown to reach its pinnacle of success in *La philosophie dans le boudoir* in Chapter 5.1.) In the following exchange between Curval and the Bishop the “negative” impetus of insensitivity is expressively revealed to reside in the same “plenum” Rousseau adumbrates in his metaphysics although Sade notably excludes there being the possibility of a (“digital”) choice, the choice of hygiene, that problematic outcome of what is otherwise Rousseau’s solid “negative” metaphysical space. “Hygiene” is ultimately “virtue” enacted:

[Curval ruminates: ... “[All that before affected one disagreeably, now encountering an otherwise prepared soul, is metamorphosed into pleasure, and from this moment onward, whatever recalls the new state one has adopted can henceforth only be voluptuous .”

“But what a distance one must travel first have ventured along the road of vice to arrive at that point!” said the Bishop.

“Yes, yes, ‘tis so,” Curval acknowledged; “but little by little one makes one’s way along, and the path one treads is strewn with flowers; one excess leads to another, the imagination, never sated, soon brings us to our destination, and as the traveler’s heart has only hardened as he has pursued his career, immediately he reaches his goal, that heart which of old contained some virtue, no longer recognizes a single one [” ...].<sup>278</sup>

The rest of this section will explore *Les 120 Journées* through these shared features developed as Rousseau’s metaphysics, drawing comparisons from Rousseau’s oeuvre, especially *La nouvelle Héloïse* and *Les Confessions*. The end of this comparison will be the

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<sup>276</sup> Pierre Klossowski, op. cit., 30.

<sup>277</sup> Klossowski called this the difference between ‘natural’ and ‘integral’ man, respectively. He argued that this juxtaposition was important for Sade in his critique of how the radical Jacobin wing steered the French Revolution. Sade reviled the Jacobins’ non-revolutionary use of ‘evil’ to uphold ‘natural’ society: in his words: ‘where de Sade wanted to establish the kingdom of integral man, the revolution wishes to make the natural man live’ (Ibid, 78).

<sup>278</sup> de Sade, *120 Days*, op. cit., 496.

demonstration of an inherent failure on the part of the epistemology of the age, a failure seen through the experiments conducted by the four “heroes” of Silling Château.

Just as Rousseau achieved through Wolmar a scaling of objects, positive to negative, in his juxtaposition of the management at Charnes estate and the rigmarole he saw outside France, Sade does something similar in recruiting his four “insensitive” managers at Silling Château - the difference of course being a matter of magnitude. On the first rung of this scale are those “Simple Passions” of Duclos’ November narrations and they have already been well summarized in how Sade was concerned for the monotony of sexual preferences and the need for those ever important details to guarantee divergences in his (almanac) entries (p. 92-93). Sade (through Duclos) made mention of that Scholastic professor from Sorbonne, whose love of “belch tasting” was only as “positive” as the shimmering boundaries of all those detailed contingencies involved in the ritual of the particular passion and, as well, the blending taking place with the passion’s ever so subtle lateral slide to another on the arrival of the next brothel visitor, who brings something derivative: “vomit tasting”. As it is for the form of the book, Duclos’ entire narration is a progressive decline from objects less to increasingly more “negative”. Mentioned as one of those three functionaries to the administrative organ of France, the “chaplain to the king”, who would have been installed at the time of Sade’s internment at the Bastille, presents not only one adumbration of an early “object” (presented November 10) but also an early indication of the kinds of problems objects pose for the characters: the sight of female-only sexual parts makes this chaplain go limp. Next in line amongst those three functionaries was the “treasurer of the Exchequer”, whose coprophilic passion should be seen as an alternative version to Wolmar’s lessons on hygiene: this being his careful application of “remedial” substitutions of objects more “positive” for those of greater “negativity”, e.g., substituting a passionate kiss for one innocuous for Saint-Preux (p. 51); or, more pertinent in this case, substituting a bottle of wine for a plate of cream for

Julie.<sup>279</sup> Reading coprophilia into these lessons, i.e., brown “cream” smeared over Lucile’s face and this “treasurer” “kissing” and licking it off, would seem ludicrous until one begins to consider the increasing care the four managers of Silling Château invest in the dietary rules of their seraglio. If Rousseau requires as a beverage for Julie: milk and sugar, tastes of the fair-sex; a meal: vegetables from the country, fine greens from one’s own garden, fish from a lake, cheese from one’s own mountain and game caught by one’s domestics with absolutely no “articulation” to the taste, i.e., with no exotic spices whatsoever (as described by Vila),<sup>280</sup> Sade requires what is from the body, produced with just as much concern for ingredients and preparation procedures:

That morning [of the nineteenth day], after having made some observations upon the shit the subjects were producing for lubricious purposes, the friends decided that the society ought to try something Duclos had spoken of in her narration: I am referring to the suppression of bread and soup from all the tables save Messieurs’. These articles were withdrawn, and replaced by twice the former quantity of fowl and game. They hoped to remark some improvement, and in less than a week an essential difference in the community’s excrement was indeed perceived: they were more mellow, softer, dissolved more readily, had an infinitely more subtle flavour [...].<sup>281</sup>

If “milk and sugar [...] are deemed symbols of innocence and sweetness [...] and] their most becoming ornaments”,<sup>282</sup> Sade skewers such a notion. To a “straw man” concern raised by one of the members about the smelliness of breath that would follow from these dietary alterations, Curval retorts:

[i]f it fall short of smelling of rot or the cadaver, well, be patient, the taste will develop, but that it have nothing but an odor of milk and honey or infancy,<sup>283</sup> that I tell you, is insufferable.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> ‘I made a most delicious repast with them. Where could you find such cream cakes as we have here? Imagine what they must be, made in a dairy where Julie presides, and eaten in her company. Franchon presented me with some cream, some seed-cake, and other little comfits. All was gone in an instant. Julie smiled at my appetite. “I find (said she, giving me another plate of cream), that your stomach does you credit every where, and that you make as good a figure among a club of females, as you do among the Valsaisans [identified earlier (NH, 1.23.81) as heart drinkers].” “But I do not (answered I) make the repast with more impunity; the one may be attended with intoxication as well as the other; and reason may be as much distracted in a nursery as in a wine-cellar.” She cast her eyes down without any reply, blushed, and began to cuddle her children. This was enough to sting me with remorse. This, my Lord, was the first indiscretion, and I hope it will be the last (Eloise, 2:256; NH, 4.10.452)’ (Anne C. Vila, op. cit., 216). (Full quotation)

<sup>280</sup> Vila, op. cit., 212-213.

<sup>281</sup> de Sade, *120 Days*, 461.

<sup>282</sup> Vila, op. cit., 212.

<sup>283</sup> Notably Rousseau has also made mention of ‘cuddling children’ as one of Wolmar’s ‘negative’ prescription for Julie.

<sup>284</sup> de Sade, *120 Days*, 462.

This lengthy documentation of the panoply of coprophilic passions was once panned by Lély as reason to reject the claim *Les 120 Journées* is a masterpiece. Countering those who would offer up such accolades, Lély states:

[...] one should point out that there is one persistent error which in many places reduced the didactic value of his work - namely, the monstrously exaggerated place which he gave to the coprolagneic aberration carried to the extreme of excess.<sup>285</sup>

Read through Rousseau, this “excess” seems not excessive at all. Next in order is that one belonging to the “post-office commissioner”, who has a passion for being whipped with scorched “iron scourge with tip metal tips” while adlibbing a judicial punishment for a crime he imagines having committed. This passion may not only be an allusion to that scandalous moment Rousseau only handled with the greatest of pusillanimity, his encounter with his whip-wielded nanny, Jacqueline, in *Confessions*; but also a harbinger to an important one in Martaine and Desgranges’ repertoire of (respective) “criminal” and “murderous” passions. Duclos uses this “commissioner’s” passion to round off the category of passive flagellation in her section and point the way for fire as “conflagration” to take on increasing significance at a time also when passive flagellation would also turn active, and thus “negative” (See page). The significance of Sade’s conflagrations is matched only by events and discourses, concerning the principle of fire, synchronous to Sade’s scientific investigations, a relevance that would actually grow in importance during the French Revolutionary period and well into the Napoleonic era (but more on this in Chapter 6). From the end of November onwards passions like passive flagellation and “heated” instruments would become increasingly more combinatory and spiral even deeper analogically towards greater depths of “negativity”. The culminating moment February 28<sup>th</sup> was the erotophonophilic murder of the gravid Constance, by her husband, the Duc, and father, Durcet. This wife/ daughter relationship - along with the son/ nephew as it was a child of the masculine sex that Curval pulled out when he opened

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<sup>285</sup> Gilbert Lély, op. cit., 306.

Constance's belly<sup>286</sup> - constitutes another important "negative" passion beginning in earnest with the narrations of Madame Champville in December, those 150 complex ones. As has been the pattern thus far, passion here is again an extension of one already attributed to Rousseau: his incestual affair with his Mama, Madame de Warnes; and his child abandonment (See Chapter 1.5). On December 5<sup>th</sup> Champville gives this anecdote of incest, revealing a gnarled picture of Edenic confusion of daughter/ son, brother/ sister, father/ husband but, more formally, a web of familial relations in deep "negativity":

[... h]e has four daughters, legitimate and wedded; he wishes to fuck all four: he makes all four of them conceive and bear children so as someday to have the pleasure of depucelating the children he has had by his daughters and whom their husbands supposed to be their own.<sup>287</sup>

In Madame Champville's next narration Sade extends the "negativity" of passion towards even higher levels of "complexity": blasphemy, officially inaugurated December 13<sup>th</sup> with the finale of the day being:

[... h]e has two girls shit upon a crucifix, he shits thereupon when they have finished, and he is frigged against the three turds covering the idol's face.<sup>288</sup>

Thus moving beyond family, towards relations of strictly "creator" and "created" - or, less anthropomorphically "cause" and "effect", Sade is adumbrating the deeper implications and doing so not handling them with the typical proximity common of Cartesian or Newtonian mechanics; rather the point of investigation is from that now familiar "distance" and in deeper "negativity", i.e., in the "plenum". In sum, all the passions developed in November and December would accelerate to a *feverish* pitch all the way through January and February where criminality and murder would be the respective heightened magnitudes. Having placed *Les 120 Journées* in a tradition of "negativity" - considering first the *Almanach Royal* an important antecedent; and now Rousseau's *La nouvelle Héloïse*; and drawing out from Sade's work that analogic shape making possible discussion of objects in incremental declines towards degrees of "negativity" what now needs to be done is to establish why all this ends

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<sup>286</sup> de Sade, *120 Days*, 670.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid, 575.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid, 581.

up in failure. To do this these “negative” objects that have so far been given only qualitative descriptions need themselves to be treated negatively, something done with great pomp and affect in *Les 120 Journées*. In other words, what need be done to these objects to get at why what follows from them is a “metaphysics of failure” is to naturalize them in accordance with how Sade managed them in his narrative. The “how” of objects is needed to complement the “what”, which has just been given.

One of the advantages of calling *Les 120 Journées* an almanac is that by this very appellation the “objects” already discussed with their varying degrees of “negativity” all fall automatically under the sway of the uniformities of nature. Had Hume a repertoire of “objects” consisting of more than just “positive” ones, the “negativities” almanacs capture may not have seemed so vulgar to his tastes or obscure to his intellectual purview as all would admit to the same centrifugal influence of this uniformity. His assertion of scepticism was basically that this influence of uniformity, ignored by many amongst his contemporaries, threatened the very core of arguments built in reason. In the section to his *Inquiry*, titled “The visible appearance of objects” Reid is quick to surrender at least one aspect of the human mind to those uniformities Hume so deftly put to such damaging effect though Reid would still label Hume’s whole effort “a puppet [...] constructed by an over-bold apprentice of nature in mimicry of nature’s own work.”<sup>289</sup> This aspect is imagination, cited in full from that fragment mentioned earlier in footnote #242:

[...] I have to talk about things that are never made the object of reflection, although at almost every moment they are presented to the mind. Nature intended them only as signs, and throughout our lives that is all we use them for. The mind has acquired an ingrained habit of inattention to visible objects; no sooner do they appear than - quick as lightning - the thing signified takes over and occupies all our attention. Although we are conscious of the appearances when they pass through the mind, their passage is so fast and so familiar that it is absolutely unnoticed: and they leave no footsteps of themselves in the memory or in *the imagination*.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>289</sup> Thomas Reid, *Inquiry into the Human Mind* (John Bennett, 2010-2015), 9.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid, 52. (Emphasis added)



Reid's emphasis here on tropistic object engagement: "the thing signified tak[ing] over and occup[ying] all our attention" follows an established pattern in scientific attempts to explain the natural world and humankind's placement therein. Reid criticized Hume for "mimicking nature's own work" but at several points already in this dissertation mimicry - or "imitation of nature" - has been seen a necessary task for scientific inquiry. And by now it is obvious this feature of imitation is lost neither on almanacs nor Sade in *Les 120 Journées*. For tropism and its direct dealings with "positive" objects to be what they are, there is the need to reshape those objects whose constitutions of indirectness necessitate some modification before engagement. Objects in "memory" and "imagination" can be said to belong to this category. In *Discours Préliminaire* d'Alembert has already been shown relegating "memory" to those "puerile first steps towards understanding", designating it the sole domain of his opponents amongst the Scholastics, who had yet to discover that all-important missing element in their erudition: "the need for "memory" to be transformed into "reason" (p. 85-86). For "imagination" he, like Reid, subordinates it to "things signified" but argues that proper "imitation of nature" "depend[s] on imagination putting together beings similar to those which are the objects of our direct ideas, the realm of reason" (p. 98), which was something, he argued, artists (in the right-hand branch of his "Detailed System of Human Knowledge") had the facility of achieving. Hume, in his phenomenological exploration of human nature in his *Treatise*, too speaks of "memory" and "imagination" in "positive" terms. For "memories" he qualified them as "lively"<sup>291</sup> such that when failures to make necessary associations occur they give off incriminating indications:

[...] memory preserves the original form in which its objects were presented, and that where-ever we depart from it in recollecting any thing, it proceeds from some defect or imperfection in that faculty.<sup>292</sup>

For "imagination" he argues that it be anything but "lively" - rather "faint and languid", mere inefficiencies in the system of cognition: "ideas are copy'd from our impressions, and that

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<sup>291</sup> Hume, op. cit., 56.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid.

there are not any two impressions which are perfectly inseparable”.<sup>293</sup> From this reason he concludes “winged horses”, “fiery dragons” and “monstrous giants” springing forth from the imagination are as harmless as “paper tigers”.<sup>294</sup> Unlike d’Alembert, Hume denied “reason” any relevance, in essence, subordinating it to the same natural realm where *Les 120 Journées* and the *Almanach Royale* have been shown to operate. Positioning himself here yet being unwilling to engage its “negative” landscape, Hume really had no other choice but to choose scepticism. And what he did add to this “landscape” ended up being only “positive” objects anyways in the guise of “negativity” as Reid himself points out:

[...] according to Hume’s system, the whole mechanism of sense, imagination, memory, belief, and all the actions and passions of the mind are explained by three laws of association together with a few original feelings. Is this the man that nature made (?).<sup>295</sup>

In this dissertation, any discussion of “negativity” has been predicated on the need for a “plenum”, that “immaterial” space where both proximity and objects (in “positive” form) are extirpated. To have a “negative space” be one part “sense”, another part “imagination”, mixed with a little bit of “memory” and then add “belief” and “passion” for good measure, as Hume would make it, is the exact recipe a common sense philosopher like Reid would reject and did so this way:

The more we know of other parts of nature, the more we like and approve them. The little that I know of the planetary system, the earth that we inhabit, minerals, vegetables and animals, my own body, and the laws that govern all these parts of nature opens to my mind grand and beautiful scenes, and contributes equally to my happiness and power.<sup>296</sup>

The four “heroes” of Silling Château fill this same “plenum” - not with the “virtue” Rousseau spoke of - but “vice”; and reading their placement in *Les 120 Journées*, a “negative” space, requires one to undergo a similar investigation Sartre would make more than a century later but from an entirely different species of “negativity”, a post-Hegelian kind: “how can [these

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<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid, 57.

<sup>295</sup> Reid, op. cit., 9.

<sup>296</sup> Thomas Reid, *An Inquiry*, op. cit., 9.

four “heroes”] be related to nothingness so that through it Nothingness comes to things?”<sup>297</sup> (The difference in Sartre’s “negative” exploration will be described in full in Chapter 5.1.) Le Brun makes as good of an attempt as anyone in placing these four central characters of *Les 120 Journées* within the backdrop of this “negative space”. Her description comes in the form of a revelry of her own. She stands in the front of the “birds of prey” cages at the Bronx Zoo, “groped and tickled by ideas, by shimmering sensations and glimmerings of memories”<sup>298</sup>:

I watched the crowd pass by, passing with that strangeness which is natural to a crowd whose subtle texture is as yet unknown: over here, the curve of someone’s thigh, the corner of a smile, a straying curl, over there, some pretty eyelashes, a glimpse of neck, an arching wrist – these things seemed unintelligible. I felt at the center of a curious void, from which arose the aviary – or rather, its sovereign inhabitants, the sudden, absolute masters of space which grew in all direction [...] <sup>299</sup>

Like all scientific attempts in the era of him writing *Les 120 Journées*, Sade too presents his version of “imitating nature”.

Before the four “heroes” of Silling Château set off on their lubricious adventure, one of the first orders of business was to lay out certain ground rules in the form of “Statutes”. Appearing in the book’s introduction, these statutes look to be at first sight simply a set of unanimously agreed-upon rules and regulations implemented to maximize the enjoyment of the sojourners while limiting all the complications that may arise managing an environment, which, by its very nature, must be unordered. Statute #1 establishes the uniformity that would govern the entirety of all *Les 120 Journées*. It also grounds the notion of a “metaphysics of failure”; something this section of this chapter has promised to reveal:

The company shall rise every day at ten o’clock in the morning, at which time the four fuckers who have not been on duty during the night shall come to pay the friends a visit and shall each bring a little boy; they shall perform as bidden by the friends’ likings and desires, but during the preliminaries the little boys shall serve only as tempting prospects, for it has been decided and planned that the eight maidenheads of the little girls’ cunts shall remain intact until the month of December, and their asses shall likewise remain in bond, as shall the asses of the eight little boys, until the month of January, at which times the respective seals shall be broken, and this in order to allow voluptuousness to become irritated by the augmentation of the desire incessantly inflamed and never satisfied, a state which must necessarily lead to that certain lascivious fury the friends shall strive to provoke, considering it one of lubricity’s most highly delectable situations.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Sartre, op. cit., 57. (Modified)

<sup>298</sup> Anne Le Brun, op. cit., 12.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid, 12-13.

<sup>300</sup> de Sade, *120 Days*, op. cit., 241. (Emphasis added)

If Reid claims objects “pass through the mind with such speed and familiarity the imagination remains unaffected”,<sup>301</sup> Sade portrays the process much differently. Sade intended the statutes not to be fortuitous laws, designed to serve the whims of the four “heroes”, but rather to be regulations aligned with cosmological events. These events would then be inflected in performances as if marking those in any cycle of an almanac, i.e., festivals with the same flair for custom and pageantry. In the 1782 *Almanach Royal* the calendric cycle followed this “Festes Mobile”:

La Septuagésime	le 27 Jan	L’Ascension	le 9 Mai	L’Avant	le 1 Dec
Les Cendres	le 13 Feb	La Pentecôte	le 19 Mai		
Pâques	le 31 Mar	La Trinité	le 26 Mai		
Les Rogations	les 6, 7, 8 Mai	La Fête-Dieu	le 30 Mai <sup>302</sup>		

If the religious calendar here traces those important events and works in the life of Christ - all anticipating the “stations of the cross” - Silling Château follows what can be called “stations of depucelation”. In a subsection in “The Third Day” of *Les 120 Journées*, entitled “Schedule of Works to be Accomplished During The Remainder of the Party” the four “heroes” outline a calendar of their own, which was to pass through four “liturgical” stages: marriage ceremonies of all sets of children “whose age forbids them from conjoining the female counterparts, staggered in January with the additional custom of handing the child over to one of the four Fuckers; the sodomistic depucelation of the male counterparts, staggered in January (after the ceremonies of each one’s respective spouse in the same month). This final ceremony had the additional feature that the event would be inaugurated by the arranged marriages of the little boys to their matches amongst the four “heroes”, the adults taking the roles of wives. Here is the schedule for just one of these child pairings: Michette and Giton:

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of November [...] Messieurs shall proceed in the morning to the marriage of Michette and Giton [...] they] shall be separated on the marriage night, for to closet them together would be as futile as this ridiculous ceremony which will serve only to create diversion during the day [...] <sup>303</sup>

On the 8<sup>th</sup> [of December], Curval shall deflower Michette. <sup>304</sup>

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<sup>301</sup> Thomas Reid, op. cit., 52.

<sup>302</sup> *Almanach Royal*, op. cit., 2.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> [of January], the Duc shall embugger Michette [...] deflowered fore by Curval, and whose ass will have been tried by the Duc, shall be turned over to Bum-Cleaver, that he may enjoy her, etc., etc.<sup>305</sup>

On the 17<sup>th</sup> [of January], the Duc shall embugger Giton [...] As the objects are progressively depucelated, they shall take the place of the wives upon the couches at storytelling time, and, at nighttime, they shall lie with the Messieurs, alternately, and at Messieurs' choice, together with the last four fairies Messieurs will take to themselves as wives during the final month [(the replacement comes as necessity as February is the month of Desgranges' narration of "murderous passions)].<sup>306</sup>

The general proceedings in these four stages would of course be repeated by all four of the child couples. The difference between the calendar in the *Almanach Royal* and *Les 120 Journées* is really only a matter of implicitness versus explicitness. In the then Catholic tradition, holidays, ceremonies and liturgical proceedings all drew on parallel alignments between cosmology, theological belief-claims and extant human actions. For example, the wedding ceremony would not have been seen as the fortuitous pairing of husband and wife but rather a metaphysical event, the "holy" union between God (through Christ, the groom) and humankind (the bride), captured in the concept of *ekklēsia* and played out with the necessity of natural uniformity: puberty -

[t]herefore man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one [...] his mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and this church.<sup>307</sup>

Just as it would be the case for religious vows, breaking the statutes at Silling Château warranted penalties. Perhaps in an effort to draw the parallel with "religion", this "negative space" that Sade's metaphysics also approaches, he issues Statute #26, relevant to all those

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<sup>304</sup> Ibid.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid, 303.

<sup>306</sup> Ibid, 304

<sup>307</sup> This concept is captured in verses 22-23 in Ephesians chapter 5: 'Wives submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. Therefore man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and his church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband' (*The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers, 2001)). (Full quotation)

imprisoned - but not to any of the four “heroes” themselves as their “negative” position behind “religious acts” makes blasphemy their default speech:

[t]he slightest religious act on the part of any subject, whomsoever he be, whatsoever be that act, shall be punished by death.<sup>308</sup>

But the four “heroes” were in fact bound to all the statutes all the same; and herein lies the “failure”, in which Sade is investing metaphysical concern. As Statute #30 enjoins:

[a]ny friend who fails to comply with any one of these articles, or who may take it into his head to act in accordance with a single glimmer of common sense or moderation and above all to spend a single day without retiring dead drunk to bed, shall be fined ten thousand francs.<sup>309</sup>

The inherent contradiction of this injunction, i.e., to be immoderate while obeying the restrictions of the law, turns up at several moments in the story where heated lust impels some from amongst the compact of “friends” to forsake the rules, forego the financial penalty and satiate the lust. No fines end up being paid though this is not to say there were no close calls. In one episode on “The First Day” when Curval is particularly overheated from the combination of Duclos’ narration and the “objects” of lust in his midst he speaks almost as if Sade were revealing cheekily the innards of the program he had just set out to portray:

“Président, be frank,” said Durcet: “on the verge of running amuck yourself, I believe that at the present moment you prefer to prepare yourself to feel how one enjoys than to discuss how one becomes disgusted.: “Why, not at all, not a bit of it,” said Curval, “I am as cool as ice... To be sure, yes,” he continued, kissing Adonis’ lips, “this child is charming... but he’s not to be fucked; *I know of nothing worse than your damnable regulations... one must reduce oneself to things... to things....* Go on. Duclos, go on, continue, for I have the feeling I might perpetrate something foolish, and I want my illusion to remain intact at least until I go to bed.”<sup>310</sup>

The lust of the four “heroes” would be kept in check but increase in ferocity all the way until the final day: the 20<sup>th</sup> of March when the final account of the “heroes”’ accomplishments read: “[w]hereof thirty were immolated and sixteen returned to Paris”. And for all the ferocity mounting until this climax - a climax surprisingly anticlimactic and modest, positioned on the page sandwiched between two tables banally recapitulating the before and after inventory of the inhabitants of Silling Château. Although the 20<sup>th</sup> of March would have had of course no specific value for Foucault, much of his scientific inquiry bears striking resemblance to the

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<sup>308</sup> de Sade, *120 Days*, op. cit., 248.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid, 276. (Emphasis added)

argument being promoted in this dissertation that “objects” of science have a particular formative history. He too sensed the importance of “object” moving amidst the Classical period through to the Modern; and one doing so according to a trajectory that resembled a transition from “negativity” to increasingly “positivity”. Just consider this historiographical line he draws in *Les Mots et les Choses*: he presents Don Quixote as playing with that *dull* object: “similitude”, which, in the course of his adventure, ends up becoming much *sharper*: “representation”, and his madness emerges from this discrepancy.<sup>311</sup> At the advent of the Modern age these *sharper* objects of the Classical age follow this transformation:

Sade’s characters correspond to him at the other end of the Classical age, at the moment of its decline [... i]t is no longer the ironic triumph of representation over resemblance, it is the obscure and repeated *violence of desire* battering at the limits of representation.<sup>312</sup>

All these shifts have a clear shape, one from dull to increasing sharpness but Foucault equivocates when he imbues this sharper edge of the historiographical line with “violence of desire”. Everything that has been gathering up until this point - on the eve of the French Revolution when a new metaphysical reality is about to be breeched - asserts the “violence of desire” recedes backwards into the “plenum”, growing in intensity with every slide into greater “negativity”. In his *Surveiller et punir* Foucault would even suggest as much when, in preparing the way for his lifelong investigation into the modern penal system, he strategically narrates with as much painstaking attention to detail - as Madame Desgranges in her February narration did - the “amende honorable” of Damiens, that gruesome execution for his part in a failed attempt on the life of Louis XIV. How can one account for the discrepancy of “violence” apparently being both on the kingly end of the spectrum and the modern one as

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<sup>311</sup> Foucault, *The Order of Things*, op. cit., 228. \* ‘Possibly Justine and Juliette are in the same position on the threshold of modern culture as that occupied by Don Quixote between the Renaissance and Classicism. Cervante’s hero, construing the relations of world and language as people had done in the sixteenth century, decoding inns into castles and farm girls into ladies with no other key than the play of resemblance, was imprisoning himself without knowing it in the mode of pure representation; but since this representation had no other law but similitude, it could not fail to become visible in the absurd form of madness. Now, in the second part of the novel, Don Quixote received his truth and his law from that represented world; he had nothing more to expect from the book in which he was born, which he had not read but whose course he was bound to follow, but a fate henceforth imposed upon him by others. He had only himself to live in a castle in which he himself, having penetrated by means of his madness into the world of pure representation.’ (Full quotation)

<sup>312</sup> Ibid.

well? Violence on the Modern edge will be the focus in the chapters to come and its explication will come with new “objects” and types of orientations toward these “objects”. These “objects” will be characterized by their extreme sharpness; and the mode of interacting with these “objects” falls to that final phase of the “posteriority-anteriority” complex, that theoretical model backstopping all discussions up until this point. This final phase is one of “interiority”, completing the triumvirate: “posteriority-anteriority-interiority” complex. The “obscure and repeated violence of desire” has been properly accounted for in this chapter, dedicated to *Les 120 Journées*. The “negative” landscape of the almanac - and Sade’s own version of it - constitutes the “obscurity” Hume adumbrates but refuses to explore in his skeptical stupor; that “repetition” (“uniformity of nature”) d’Alembert attempts to “imitate” but could only do so using frozen “positivities”. It is *Les 120 Journées* where the “violence of desire” reached its highest pitch but discovered its most abyssal failure: just as Curval above lamented: “I know nothing worse than your damnable regulations... one just reduces oneself to things... to things”, desire reaches its limit at nature and can go no further. However, the Storming of the Bastille would mark an important sea-change. And the natural and human sciences would never be the same thereafter. It is no ebullient exaggeration when Schaeffer boldly suggested: “For *Les Cent Vingt Journée de Sodome* is one of the most radical, *one of the most important novels ever written*”.<sup>313</sup> Posterity is most fortunate to even have bequeathed such a work in amongst the tumult of that pivotal event.

In the next chapter, Sade will be presented as an important purveyor of knowledge of the changing historical conditions moulding what would become the transformed object of scientific inquiry in the modern age. In the first section, “interiority”, that third element of the tripartite concept: “posteriority-anteriority”, will be introduced as the epistemological ground for the formation of “positive” knowledge in the modern scientific sense of the word. In the

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<sup>313</sup> Neil Schaeffer, op. cit., 343. (Emphasis added)



section that follows, Sade's contribution will be linked to the reflections of other esteemed thinkers of the time, Joseph Priestley and Jeremy Bentham, whose approaches share surprising similarities to those of Sade's. Pneumatology will be introduced as a rubric with sufficient breadth to capture the changing form of both knowledge and knower. The success of such a conceptualization will be shown to depend on having a "plenum" with scales of "negativity" and "positivity" firmly in place.

## Chapter 3

**Revolution****3.1 The Biography of Sade and the French Revolution**

In the introduction Foucault selecting Sade to be the principle transitional figure between the Classical and the Modern Ages was said to be a suggestive assertion. However, one problem was introduced in the abstract to this paper that would undermine the substance of this claim. Another problem will be presented in addition to this one. The first problem concerned Foucault's theoretical starting point matching in principle that of d'Alembert's and his eponymously named "Principle". D'Alembert sought to avoid having to address "causation" in investigating "objects of science", doing so by limiting his line of enquiry strictly to physical objects, specifically to their "inertia, equilibrium and composition of motion"<sup>314</sup> - to use Terrall's words. In other words, he aimed his attention at "effects", articulable with quantitative measurements with no need for speculation:

This reduction made mechanics "rather a science of effects than of causes" [...] By breaking the motion resulting from a collision into one component of initial motion and another of motion destroyed or lost in the collision d'Alembert sidestepped the question of what caused the change in motion at the instant of impact. The component of motion destroyed is a precise quantity that can meaningfully appear in a descriptive equation regardless of how it came to be lost or where it went.<sup>315</sup>

Foucault also deployed a strategy of "effects", or, in his words, "transformations", "causations" like: "role of instruments, techniques, institution... seem[ing] to [him] as more magical than effective" (see Abstract). For the second problem, Foucault was praised for how he saw the shaping of "objects of science" as they evolved from the Classical to the Modern age. He adumbrated how the dullness, characteristic of Renaissance "objects", or "similitudes", sharpened incrementally towards the "representations" deployed by scientists in the Classical age with Sade rounding out the Modern age. It was with him that the "violence of desire" had the sharpness to breach the limits of "representations" and take on

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<sup>314</sup> Mary Terrall, op. cit., 252

<sup>315</sup> Ibid, 253.

the penetrateness characteristic of Modern science (p. 8). But the source of this “violence” was said to be not clearly established especially when the historical narrativization in *Les Mots et les Choses* meets the historical analysis of the origin of the Modern penal system in *Surveiller et Punir*; from this apposition, the axes of violence appear reversed with Sade on the more Modern end; and Damiens on the rack on the other. The ambiguity probably rests on the condition of that same “positivity”, behind which Foucault, the philosopher of “effects” barricaded himself. The flatness violence inevitably becomes when given exclusively “positive” treatment comes through when Foucault reflects on what happened to Damiens during his fateful “amende honorable”. Foucault reiterated Kantorowitz’s point that punishment of a criminal’s body was linked in “symmetrical inversion” to that of the King’s, the King’s body being physical yet also the immaterial and timeless representation of the kingdom: enduring icon, legal foundation, liturgical center and Christological embodiment.<sup>316</sup> Apposing terms designating “negativity”: “immaterial”, “liturgical” and “icon” with ones latently “positive”: “legal foundation” and “representation” has the effect of making all by default equally “positive” if the species of these objects are not given their proper distinguishing qualifications. “Representations” and their inundation by the “violence of desire” also end up as overall “positive” despite “desire” being given a prominent position. This absence of depth in handling “desire” also falls upon Auguste Comte, who traces his own epistemological timeline from the religious to the metaphysical through to the positive mindset of the Modern age in his *Cours de Philosophie Positive*. His notion of “desire” ends up being of the same “positive” form as what Foucault presents but unlike Foucault’s purportedly “negative” qualification Comte is perfectly content to match “positive” form with “positive” qualification:

Human reason is now so mature that we are able to undertake laborious scientific researches without having in view any extraneous goal capable of strongly exciting the imagination, such as that which the astrologers or

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<sup>316</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 28-29.

alchemists proposed to themselves. Our intellectual activity is sufficiently excited by the mere hope of discovering the laws of phenomena, by the simple *desire* of verifying or disproving a theory.<sup>317</sup>

Foucault's attempt to conjure up a "negative" dimension to his study of "objects of scientific inquiry" has been lauded in this dissertation especially in how he positions Sade in his overall argument. But he musters a result fundamentally no different than Comte, who in 1830 articulates incisively the apparent washing away of these "negative" processes, i.e., imagination from the "History of Science". Foucault's handling of Sade is skeletal and he did not to enough to engage more deeply in the oeuvre of Sade to fortify more solidly his argument in *Les Mots et les Chose*. Before returning to this oeuvre and its position within the "History of Science", it is worth drawing out some significant anecdotes from Sade's own biography to ground the position, which will occupy the theoretical dimensions in the second section of this chapter.

On close analysis, much of the content of Sade's first letter to his faithful lawyer, Gaufridy - delivered shortly after the abrogation of the *lettres de cachet* that had held him in prison for fifteen years at the behest of his intractable mother-in-law, Madame de Montreuil - confirms Rousseau's earlier contention that in states of reverie in the "Bastille, or a dungeon, where no object struck [one's] sight" (p. 64) something of an enriching state of contemplation be possible where much insight could be gained. In this early May 1790 letter Sade expressed how productive he had been in prison, exclaiming, "[d]o you realize, my dear lawyer, that I had fifteen volumes ready for the press (?),"<sup>318</sup> and continuing on to berate his wife for not removing these works in time of the ransacking of the Bastille, after whose aftermath less than a quarter of them would remain. More interestingly in this letter, though, is the self-description of his own psychological state upon confronting the "objects" of a new French society that awaited him outside:

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<sup>317</sup> Auguste Comte, *Introduction to Positive Philosophy* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1988), 6.

<sup>318</sup> Gilbert L  ly, op. cit., 315.

[...] sight and lungs ruined, and through lack of exercise I have become so corpulent that I can scarcely move, sense are all deadened, I have lost all sense of taste, I care for naught, the world I was so mad about seems an utter bore to me... a wretched bore!... There are moments when I have the mind to become a Trappist, and I will not promise not to vanish one of these days without anybody's knowing where I have disappeared to. I was never such a misanthrope as I am since I have returned to human society and if I seem strange when I present myself to people they can be sure they produce the impression on me.<sup>319</sup>

Coming from a moral scientist like himself, these words are not simply indulgent complains and one remembers Rousseau's state of mind while writing his *Rêveries* and how in the overall evolution of his anthology it too constituted an abrupt metaphysical transformation. This state of mind vis-à-vis "objects" of the world would soon find new transformations as Sade, the turn coat, would adapt quite well to his new environment and actually rose to a prominent position as an "active citizen" in the capacity of a "man of letters" in the highly influential, militant wing of the new National Assembly, the Section des Piques. Part functionary; part propagandist Sade took up a minor role, albeit one of surprising relevance in the emerging new French republic. For example, he was responsible for drawing up policy directives for the General Assembly of Hospitals, having the responsible for several wards in Paris; even recommending (and implementing):

[...] that in future every wretched patient of the hospital was given a separate bed and people were no longer made to sleep two or three in a bed.<sup>320</sup>

Sade's position in this new society would be precarious despite the accolades he earned for his revolutionary prose and diligent work carrying out his various postings, one rising even as high as a stint as magistrate for the Piques Ward. His colorful background - along with events really outside his control - placed him in direct line to the guillotine, however; and had it not been for some assistance from higher-ups and sheer luck, he would have certainly met this fate. But Sade's manner of engaging the "objects" of his world - in a manner, which it has already been suggested he did with considerable facility - constitutes a novel metaphysical approach characteristic of this new revolutionary age and an approach that saw Sade through to both the successes and failures of his intensive involvement with the high-stakes

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<sup>319</sup> Ibid.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid, 347.

revolutionary politics of the time. Partly out of both ambition and the sheer precariousness of his position as an indulgent ex-aristocrat with a checkered past, Sade with great perspicuity structures in the following epistolic passage this new engagement as an oscillation between something appearing as “motivationally authentic” yet “demandingly inauthentic”, ones, whose constitutive forms would take on increasing “positive” qualities:

[...] the daily necessity of working first for one party, then another, results in a mobility of opinions which affects my inmost mode of thought. And if I really do probe into it, it proves to be for no party at all, but a compound of them all. I am an anti-Jacobin and hate them to death; I worship the King, but I loathe the old abuses; I love very many articles of the constitution, but others revolt me [...] There you have my *profession of faith*. Now what am I? Aristocrat or democrat? Tell, please, my dear lawyer, for I myself have no idea at all.<sup>321</sup>

And herein lies that manner of “object” engagement promised earlier, termed: “interiority” that one said emerging much later alongside the “posteriority” and “anteriority” of prior focuses. As an important digression, it is worth introducing “interiority” by establishing what this “mobility of opinion” actually was not - despite how Sade would characterize it. The reference in this passage to “crisis of faith” needs careful treatment given what has been said up until this point concerning those comparative values of “negativity” and “positivity”. The new source of motivation particular to the French Revolution and fear for that new instrument of punishment that would enforce this motivation’s “object” are the very concern for “authenticity” and “inauthenticity” shown spinning Sade in apparent perplexing circularity. It is worth staging Sade’s “crisis of faith” in the context of a longer history of faith to demonstrate to what extent Sade incisively perceived that a new stage had been reached.

Though the American and French Revolutions shared many of the same “positive” mantras, e.g., the rule of law over arbitrary edicts of kings; equal citizenry over feudal subjecthood, the landscape cannot be said to be at all similar. In *Visionary Republic: Millennial Themes of American Thought, 1756-1800*, Ruth H. Bloch describes how American witnesses initially gloated from afar over the accomplishments of the French revolutionaries.

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<sup>321</sup> Ibid, 328. (Emphasis added)

They would have believed their counterparts held a common millennialist vision where triumph over one of the “four Beasts of the Book of Revelation”,<sup>322</sup> would bring promises of the same God-inspired gifts of equality, freedom and democracy, shared with America, the primogeniture. Bloch conveys the sense of shock once the French Revolution verged toward something much more materialistic:

The threat posed by French Deism and Atheism now seemed to counter-balance, indeed outweigh French anti-Catholicism. Few remained sanguine about the possibility of the Protestant France... in addition, although in 1793-94 many Protestant leaders had been able to excuse the Terror and even the French civil religion, they had done so in the faith that the republic would soon find a proper Protestant and Libertarian, religious and political bearing. Shortly after the outbreak of the European war, however, Federalist propaganda escalated its attack against French infidelity.<sup>323</sup>

But the ranges in anti-Catholicism expressed in both revolutions reveal two similar yet distinct motivational orientations where the status of the “objects” of focus is the point of divergence. The beginning for the American orientation is conversion, an orientation with deep ties to the legacy of the Reformation. Conversion, amidst any two systems of belief, is imbued with deep “negativity” and seem to follow these trends: a) it seems never a haphazard act with subtle alterations in subjectivity but rather one with profound reverberations, burrowing deep into human “negative” behavior, i.e., imagination, desire and passion; yet b) the landscape between the old and the new professions of faith still comprises “objects” whose “negative” qualities make for easy accommodation of what previously existed. Conversion is not about changing and then contending with myriads of contradictions that come in the aftermath but rather it is radical accommodation. (Again contradictions only occur when dealing with “positive” objects.) The Protestant Reformation, though maintaining much of the same “negative” landscape as its Catholic competitor, did move incrementally towards “positivity”, its theological adage: “justified by faith alone” marking a sharp turn away from appeal to an apparatus based strictly on “relations”, e.g., the Holy See and the

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<sup>322</sup> Ruth H. Bloch, *Visionary Republic: Millennial Themes in American Thought 1756-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 164.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid, 203.

Holy Seal. The American Revolution, along with the rhetoric of freedom and equality that was thereafter enshrined into law, can be said to follow naturally from the Reformation. Reflecting on Harold J. Berman's *Law and Revolution Volume 2, The Impact of the Protestant Reformations on the Western Legal Tradition*, Michael D. Gordon considers how Berman took Luther and Calvin's respective reformations in German and England to be of like:

total[ity...] to those of the late eighteenth century"; both sets of revolutions were "capital R" revolutions; both were "reality" revolutions.<sup>324</sup>

Berman contends that any separation between "negative" theism and "positive" secularism be but one of scale:

[...] the acquisition by secular governments of powers once held by ecclesiastical courts was less the secularization of the spiritual and more the spiritualization of the secular.<sup>325</sup>

One of the outgrowths of Protestantism is that novelty that would set the pattern for a new manner of "object" engagement - not one as "objects" "out there" as "tropistic", i.e., those already seen developing out of the transition from "posteriority" to "anteriority", but rather "objects" of what pursues these "tropistic" "objects".<sup>326</sup> Still remaining, however, here in the "negative" backdrop of a millennialist faith that held the "Kingdom of Heaven" to be a model

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<sup>324</sup> Michael D. Gordon, 'Book Review: Harold J. Berman. *Law and Revolution. Volume 2, The Impact of the Protestant Reformations on the Western Legal System*' in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 110, Issue 3, 2005, 855.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid.

<sup>326</sup> It should be noted that this description is purposefully streaming past intermediate stages of the development of these 'objects that pursue'. For example, Benedict Anderson in his book *Imagined Communities* elaborated on several historical instances where the notion of 'absolute relations' falls into different partitions such as was the case when behemoth cultural groups began increasingly to intermingle in trade and diplomacy in the 'Age of Discover'" in the High Middle Ages. Anderson accounts how Marco Polo's reverence for the Mongolian ruler Kublai Khan forces him into having to share his Catholic cosmos with another in a telling episode of religious relativism: 'The Christian regard Jesus Christ as their divinity; the Saracens, Mahomet; the Jew, Moses; and the idolaters,, Sogomombar-kan, the most eminent among their idols. I do honour and show respect to all the four, and invoke to my aid whichever amongst them is in truth supreme in heaven. But from the [...] manner in which his majesty acted towards them, it is evident that he regarded the faith of the Christians as the truest and the best' (Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991), 12). Anderson also links the surging growth of Protestantism to 'print-capital' that was able to deliver the messages of the Reformations much quicker and more steadily than their Catholic counterparts, who had the disadvantage in being tied to the ecclesiastic language, Latin and ill-disposed towards the printing press from the beginning. Francois I in 1535 even tried to ban book-making to halt the spread of Reformation literature (Ibid, 26). Anderson captures this new slide towards increased 'positivity' within Christendom itself when he said '[...] the fall of Latin exemplified a larger process in which the sacred communities integrated by old sacred languages were gradually fragmented, pluralized, and territorialized' (Ibid, 13).



for the American Revolution, this manner of “object” engagement would eventually reach Sade in a different revolution with very different “objects”. His lamentation about the “mobility of opinions” and confusion over the profession of his own faith in the high-stakes game of revolutionary political activism testify to this new form of “object”, one much more “positive”. What comes from this is something metaphysically new where there is a dual “objectness” of that, which is pursued and that, which is doing the pursuing - coming together into an overall “positivity”. (This newness comes on account of how widespread this object orientation became during the Revolution, its small scale version being of course on display in interactions in the Salon as Rousseau’s story of Grimm (p. 46) and his differentiation of “morals” and “principles” have shown (p. 70).) This is the beginning of a notion where unity exists in both natural (“objects” outside) and human (“objectness” of what is inside) phenomena. This is something of concern to Comte over a decade later when he states:

[t]he formation of social physics at last completes the system of natural science” once theology and metaphysics and their “characters of universality” had become historical footnotes.<sup>327</sup>

In his letter to Gaufridy, Sade is introducing “authenticity” not as the motivational orientation towards “objects” themselves but as the source of the “motivation”, the new starting point of this engagement, which would be firmly embedded *en masse* once French “citizenry” was inscribed into law and given a period of time to take full effect. This is, in a nutshell, the nature of “interiority”. And once again to add “inauthenticity” to the pairing, the other half Sade raises in his statement of mixed loyalties, it is worth examining what demanding force lurked behind and haunted Sade throughout the Revolution. It turns out that this force was novel as well; and had just as “positive” an impetus as that one seen here in “authenticity”.

In his analysis of the evolution of criminality from those “greater gangs of malefactors” of the Middle Ages, notorious for their flagrant acts of physical violence; to those “smaller groups” emerging in the eighteenth century, who preferred less risky “anti-

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<sup>327</sup> Auguste Comte, op. cit., 14.

property”<sup>328</sup> plunder, Foucault in *Surveiller et Punir* gives a telling confirmation of the relationship just developed as the dual ascent of “objects” into “positivity” and that “negativity” that develops alongside it: the punishing force. It is here where “authentic” motivation and “inauthentic” demand fall invariably towards that metaphysical turn towards “interiority”:

A general movement shifted criminality from the attack of bodies to the more or less direct seizure of goods; and from a ‘mass criminality’ to a ‘marginal criminality’, partly the preserve of professionals. It was as if there had been a gradual lowering of level – ‘a defusion of the tensions that dominate human relations ... a better control of violent impulses – and as if the illegal practises had themselves slackened their hold on the body and turned to other targets. *Crime became less violent long before punishment became less severe.*<sup>329</sup>

The pursued “targets” Foucault speaks of are those “objects” of increasing “positivity”, whose deployment increasingly takes on “tropistic” complexity, in other words, the increased necessity for survival being dependent on technical or professional skill rather than sheer violence. The incline from criminal hordes to smaller compacts is a form of this narrowing. (This comes of course atop those sources of motivation already seen narrowing, i.e., Luther’s souls, “justified by faith” and those geopolitical and technological revolutions Anderson explores in footnote #326: the diplomatic one, during the Age of Discovery and that cultural one with the invention of the printing press.) Having been attributed a “negative” qualification, this “inauthentic force” - now the focus of interest - has as well an incline into “positivity”. This is traceable to the evolution of laws; and Foucault, once again, is indispensable in providing insight. Firstly, Foucault starts with legal punishment under monarchical rule and presents it with every quality of “negativity”, noting in particular its contradictory and violent nature:

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<sup>328</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, op. cit., 75. \* ‘[...] the internal organization of delinquency altered; the greater gangs of malefactors (looters working in small, armed units, groups of smugglers firing on the agent of the tax authorities, disbanded soldiers or deserters who roamed the countryside together) tended to break up’ tracked down more efficiently and forced to work in smaller groups [...] in order to pass undetected, they contented themselves with more furtive operations, with a more modest deployment of forces and less risk of bloodshed: “The physical destruction of institutional dislocation of large groups... left the field free for an anti-property form of delinquency practised by individuals or very small groups of robbers and pickpockets, seldom more than four in number.” (Full quotation)

<sup>329</sup> Ibid, 76.

[... i]t was because [the King] had brought the law into conflict with too many summary acts of justice [...] or with administrative measures, that he paralyzed normal justice, rendered it sometimes lenient and inconsistent, but sometimes over-hasty and severe.<sup>330</sup>

Foucault then anticipates the “positivity” of what laws would eventually become, spelling out what would be realized as the dream of the reform movement of the eighteenth century:

[... t]he ‘super-power’ of the monarch [was...] too concentrated at certain privileged points [...] too divided between opposing authorities[; it should be] distributed in homogeneous circuits capable of operating everywhere [...] continuous[ly] [...] down to the finest grain of the social body.<sup>331</sup>

Much of what Foucault does in *Surveiller et Punir* is present how “homogeneous circuits” were constructed, using modes of “discipline” that were aimed at laws in one-to-one correspondences (rationalization): “let the punishment fit the crime”.<sup>332</sup> It is here where “authentic motivation” met its match: “inauthentic demand”. And that one instrument of punishment that would have preoccupied Sade in life - but not in prose - was the guillotine. Foucault described this instrument as the ultimate “positive principle”, a rational executioner par excellence:

[d]eath was reduced to a visible, but instantaneous event [...] contact between the law [...] and the body of the criminal [...] reduced to a split second.<sup>333</sup>

And although its design had in mind a form of punishment more “humane” than previous methods; more “digital” in “innocence” and “guilt” being tied in direct correspondence to other absolute categories like “legal” and “illegal” and “life” and “[instantaneous] death” - all with little to no intermediary ground - Sade saw in it something far more pernicious. Part of the reason for this attitude comes from the fact Sade was an old-styled moral scientist in a world turning its back on “sensibilité” as an approach to explore the natural and human worlds, doing so in favour of a scientificity that would not have been Sade’s forte. The other part comes due to a reason much more personal; and it is to this reason that we now turn.

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<sup>330</sup> Ibid, 80.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid.

<sup>332</sup> For a deeper reading into how discipline and ‘fair’ punishment were pursued ‘positively’, see Foucault’s chapter ‘Docile Bodies’.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid, 13.

In the introduction of this dissertation, two very different experiments, conducted at the foot of the guillotine, helped reveal the aims for two scientific orientations often mistaken as the same. Although both Cabanis and Sade set their erudite minds at the location of death, their methods followed two very different trajectories: for Cabanis, it was material facts garnered from reason; for Sade, imagination. These two distinct categories of scientific inquiry could follow the classifications: sensitivity and sensibilité, respectively. In experiments at the guillotine, Staum tells of how Cabanis reduced pain's origination to nervous sympathies, i.e., consciousness of pain to fully functional brain and spinal cord.<sup>334</sup> Non-pain isolated to corpses; death assigned as the terminus, marking all human "positive" possibilities would have both been acceptable *specificities* in nineteenth-century "sensitivity". Sade underwent his experimentations with test subjects, trial after trial, bringing the issue of pain and death to the very same location as Cabanis but never settling on anything conclusive that could be qualified in "positive" terms. Consider these two examples: the suturing of the vagina of Madame de Mistival to prolong pain long enough to realize a syphilitic death, as narrated in *La philosophie de le boudoir*:

Madame de Mistival, opening her eyes –Oh heavens! Why do you recall me from the grave's darkness? Why do you plunge me again into life's horrors?/ Dolmance, whipping her steadily - Indeed, mother dear, it is because much conversation remains to be held [...];<sup>335</sup>

Or, in *L'Histoire de Juliette*, Saint-Fond's alchemical recipe for eternal pain after death:

[...] have him sign a pact, writ in his heart's blood, whereby he contracts his soul to the devil [...] insert this paper in his asshole and to tamp it home with one's prick [... h]is agonies [...] shall be everlasting.<sup>336</sup> One element this hypothetical meeting between Cabanis and Sade at the foot of the guillotine

failed to disclose at the time is that Sade, though familiar with the guillotine in life, was diffident to conduct such experiments with it in writing. Sade's lily-livered response to the guillotine is an issue taken up by David McCallam in "‘La Machine’: Sade, The Guillotine

<sup>334</sup> Martin S. Staum, op. cit., 192.

<sup>335</sup> Richard Seaver and Austryn Wainhouse, trans., 'Philosophy in the Bedroom', in *Marquis de Sade: Justine, Philosophy in the Bedroom, & Other Writings* (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 362.

<sup>336</sup> Austryn Wainhouse, trans., *Marquis de Sade: Juliette* (New York: Grove Press, 1968), 369-70.

and Eroticism”. To summarize his position, the guillotine conjured up far greater horrors for Sade than those he imagined in his own novels, those one that

[...] provide any exquisite agony for the libertine to savour [...] slowed to multiple, partial blows [...] elid[ing] the moment of death which equates the libertine text to the moment of orgasm of the executioner or torturer.<sup>337</sup>

McCallum argues that Sade’s antipathy for the guillotine is consistently held throughout his entire oeuvre and, although McCallum does introduce that all too common anachronism whenever decapitation enters into any orbit of sexual meaning: the Freudian notion of “threat of castration”; he does correctly position the guillotine squarely at the center where science and society intersect under a common historical alignment. At issue here is another telling statement of that transition of the “object of science” from its “negative” origin to its new “positive” reality:

[...] the guillotine is on the whole rejected by the Sadean imagination. It inverts the dynamics between the libertine torturer and his machines: the revolutionary “bourreau” [...] can no longer serve as a model for Sade’s experiments in pain; pull a cord and holding up a mechanically severed head, he is reduced to the status of a state functionary. The erstwhile torturer is now in the service of the machine he operates, he is just as instrumentalized by the guillotine as is its victims.<sup>338</sup>

Sade’s non-response to the guillotine in writing should be seen just as much a polemical statement of opposition to scientific trends of his day as it was a statement of something much more personal. In one of those curious historical turns during the Revolution when “prisoner” Sade was moved to the comparatively tranquil prison, Picpus hospital - due in part to a medical condition; and the clandestine financial stewardship of a wealthy female friend (Constance Quesnet) - the guillotine happened to be transferred from its regular location at the Place de la Concorde to the Place du Trône-renversé. The reason Lély gives for this transfer is that the original location “could no longer bear the stench of the blood” and the new location was fitted with a new modification: “[a] lead-lined vat was placed under the knife to catch” the blood and drain it off to a charnel-house.<sup>339</sup> This new site happened to be a

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<sup>337</sup> David McCallum, “‘La Machine’: Sade, The Guillotine and Eroticism’, in *Marquis de Sade and the Scientia and Techne of Eroticism* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publication, 2007), 66-67.

<sup>338</sup> Ibid, 62.

<sup>339</sup> Gilbert Lély, op. cit., 366.

few hundred yards away from Sade's prison window; and he testified that he had been privy to the massacres carried out in all seriality, exclaiming to Gaufridy:

[... my] imprisonment by the people, with the guillotine under my eyes [...] hurt me a hundred times more than all the bastilles in the world.<sup>340</sup>

More than just an individual concerned about whether or not he lived or died, Sade's personal plea here has the richness of a "moral scientist". Framing Sade as a preserver of "sensibilité" in a very different age of science adds a greater depth to how he engaged the guillotine. This instrument was the placeholder for that period of violent paroxysms before "positivity" had the sufficient "sharpness" to cut past the nape of the neck and sink deeper into the recesses of the social body. Foucault called this depth, the "soul" and went about with great finesse, laying out all the machinery that would constitute this new kind of incision, his explication of the Panopticon being his most famous. But he misses the smooth causal chain that saw the guillotine as an intermediary stage. (Foucault, of course, would have rejected such a causal prescription.) Sade writing his letters to Gaufridy in the midst of the Revolution is offering a first-hand - and highly personal - account of what is afoot in the "metaphysics" evolving around him. Sade revealing this new manner of "object engagement" is a needed complement to what Foucault has already opened up in his exploration of the prehistory of natural and social science in modernity. And the guillotine figures important, taking centre stage at least in Sade's mind by its salient de-emphasis in his oeuvre and emphatic predominance in his biography as that pre-panoptic exemplar of that "inauthentic" demanding force.

In concluding consulting details from Sade's biography to help develop the emergence of that new manner of object engagement: "interiority", it is worth pressing forward a little further to show another way the convergence of positive "objects" just developed anticipates that non-lethal "inauthentic demand" Foucault would make his chief

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<sup>340</sup>Ibid, 367.

intellectual contribution: the formative structure of all discourses in the human and natural sciences. One of the surprising heights Sade managed to reach as a “Citizen” of the Revolution was the opportunity he had to both write and deliver the eulogy for the then recently assassinated supreme heroes of the French Revolution: Jean-Paul Marat and Louis-Michel Le Pelletier. The document was titled “Speech to the Shades of Marat and Le Pelletier” and Lély does not spare the document any critical diplomacy when he acerbically declared:

[...] not lacking native eloquence, not that [...] the familiar grandeur of his prose was missing but in the gush of revolutionary commonplaces such words as *virtue*, *happiness*, *patriotism* and *liberty* are frivolously used, to express *falsehood* and *ignorance*”.<sup>341</sup>

The guillotine still not yet out of Sade’s peripheral vision one may ask: was it the case that Sade was under duress when writing his famous denigration of Marat’s assassin, Charlotte Corday, that one, against whom Sade’s discourse rises to a “negative” pitch. Probably not. But much force underlies the theatrics that were on display, those ones Lély insinuates are “inauthentic”:

Oh, timid, gentle fair sex, how could it be that your delicate hands could take up that dagger? Ah, but the eagerness you all show, coming to cast your flowers on the tomb of that true friend of the people, has made us oblivious of the fact that the hand that struck, sprang from among you. Like those mixed creatures which belong to neither sex, vomit of hell of universal ill omen, the barbaric murder of Marat belongs to nobody. Let a funeral veil hide her memory for ever, let nobody every more depict her, as has been done hitherto, under the seductive sign of loveliness. Too credulous by far, you artists, destroy, deface, smash the features of that monster, or show it to us solely amid the demons of Tartary....<sup>342</sup>

Sade had spent much of the revolutionary period hawking his latest plays to the big Parisian theatres, doing so to quite meagre success; and one remembers back to Rousseau, who too narrates his struggle to win an audience for his operas from among the urbane classes of Paris until the success of his *The Soothsayer*, that opera mentioned in Chapter 1.3 of this dissertation. Could there be anything then different in both Rousseau and Sade’s ambition to please? The difference revealed by Sade’s damnation of Corday is a case of “life imitating art” and this may have just as well been on Rousseau’s mind when he cynically doffed the

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<sup>341</sup> Ibid, 353.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid, 354.

“lovesickness” of Grimm, that “unauthentic” sycophant. The difference the French Revolution brought was that the “positive” articulation Grimm exemplified as one example amongst the whole of the Parisian coterie, from which Rousseau would eventually flee, became the norm for all citizenry, christened by the Revolution. All the hoi polloi joined the theatre troupe. Theatre actors have “positive” roles, impelled to act according to “positive” features of what the particular theatre piece actually is: lines, props, a backdrop and all of this need not have a guillotine to enforce “inauthentic demands”. As the story of Grimm demonstrates, further articulation of “positive” roles comes with serendipitous possibilities and from these possibilities the overall “positivity” already described: “objects pursued” (anteriority) and “objects doing the pursuing” (interiority) find a new theatrical model for a the new society, one engendered by the French Revolution. The “positivity” of this new “citizenry” would have been enshrined into law: either as legislation or the new tacit norms displaying revolutionary fervour, all the “positive” propositions to the structure of this grand theatre. And add to this, the “negative” resonances, with which Sade inflects his characterization of Corday (“vomit of hell of universal ill omen”), that person who did not play according to her prescribed “role” as both subservient woman (“timid, gentle fair sex”) and obedient revolutionary (“you artists, destroy, deface, smash the features of that monster”). Enter the sociologist Erving Goffman and his 1959 development of the concept of “performances” in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* and theatre becomes a fitting heuristic for all “positive” objects, inauthentic but necessary for some social instrumentality:

[...] the performer may not be taken in at all by his own routine. This possibility is understandable, since no one is in quite as good an observational position to see through the act as the person who puts it on. Couple with this, the performer may be moved to guide the conviction of this audience only as a means to other ends, having no ultimate concern in the conception that they have of him or of the situation.<sup>343</sup>

Biographers, who compare Sade’s novels with his theatrical writings, are quick to point out the superiority of the former:

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<sup>343</sup> Erving Goffman, ‘Performance’, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (London: Penguin books, 1990), 28.



[...] the dramatic works, being most public, suffer most from conventionality and form what appears to be Sade's inherent timidity when faced with the dramatic form.<sup>344</sup>

How can this be a criticism for one, who wants to play a role in the grand narrative of his day? Maurice Lever offers an answer to this question and brings the focus, once again, to the model of theatrics, developed here as that non-lethal form of inauthentic demand. He compares the mask that enabled luminaries like Diderot and Voltaire in literature to dissimulate behind contradictory positions: materialism in *Rêve d'Alembert* and sentimentality in *Père de famille* for Diderot; corrosive sarcasm in *Candide* and teary pathos in *Zaïre*, Voltaire,<sup>345</sup> to that one impossible to wear in theatre:

[i]n a novel, an essay, or a philosophical tale one can bite and scratch, but on the stage one plays the sanctimonious hypocrite: one pulls in one's ideas as a cat pulls in its claws.<sup>346</sup>

The state of the society, being presented here as theatre means necessarily that this impossibility to dissimulate would also apply to the actors populating the stage within that backdrop: the French Revolution. Sade is an underappreciated philosopher of the transition between the Enlightenment and the Modern Age, whose very biography (captured in his many epistolary correspondences) attests to the new manner of object engagement just described: "interiority". Adumbrating the object and object engagement needs the perspicuity of a moral philosopher to get at it. Sade has the unique biographical attribute of having been an active writer before the Revolution, throughout its duration but also in the aftermath and well into the Napoleonic period and beyond. Now it is clear that he saw something concerning the "object of scientific inquiry" at its different phases, confirming what Foucault presented with much brevity (focusing only on the correspondence between the works *Justine*

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<sup>344</sup> Austryn Wainhouse, Richard Seaver, 'Introduction to Oxtiern, or The Misfortunes of Libertinage (1800)', *Marquis de Sade: The 120 Days of Sodom & Other Writings*, op. cit., 682. \* 'What of Sade the playwright? It is an understatement to maintain that, were his seventeen plays all that history had bequeathed us of his writings, Sade would have hardly had a claim to immortality. The force, and indeed the essential worth, of Sade's works varies directly in proportion to their clandestine nature. The more open and public they are, the more conventional they become. The dramatic works, being most public, suffer most from conventionality and form what appears to be Sade's inherent timidity when faced with the dramatic form.' (Full quotation)

<sup>345</sup> Maurice Lever, *Sade/A Biography* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1993), 374.

<sup>346</sup> Ibid.

and *Juliette*). Consider how the date July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1789 seems to be an approximate partition for many amongst the older order of moral scientists of Sade's generation. Sade would die at a ripe old age on the second of December, 1814 and would have been that one witness of the full maturation of the "object" of scientific inquiry.

### 3.2 Priestley and Bentham: Towards a Metaphysics of Success

When Auguste Comte sat down to write his reflection on the history of the "object of scientific inquiry" in his 1830 *Cours de Philosophie Positive* much of the dust had long settled on both the tumultuous periods of the 1790 Revolution and Napoleonic era but trouble was brewing yet again with the onset of the 1830 Revolution close at hand; and Comte made that perennial call to reflect on how "positive" science could again play the role of saviour in correcting societal ills. The principal figures in this section, Joseph Priestley and Jeremy Bentham, were contemporaries of Sade on the other side of the English Channel and they shared the same optimism Comte would express yet the two Englishmen had nothing of the same justification as Comte. As a matter of fact, the "negative" trajectory of the two men placed them in a similar orbit as Sade and taken together actually constitutes an important phase in the history of the "object" of scientific inquiry. By 1830, optimism was given a strictly "positive" prescription, anything falling short being "inimical" to the health of society; and Comte's assertion liaises nicely with what has been discussed as the simultaneity of "posteriority", "anteriority" and "interiority" just developed as the basis for theatrics during the French Revolution - all three phases on display in, for example, Sade's eulogy for Marat and Pelletier. In the section of *Cours*, "The Nature and Importance of the Positive Philosophy" Comte entreats his reader to decide on what he calls one "common social doctrine" to remedy once and for all the "great political and social crisis" at the heart of what he called a continued state of anarchy and revolution.<sup>347</sup> He attributes the remaining seeds of

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<sup>347</sup> Auguste Comte, op. cit, 28.

dissension amongst men to a refusal to choose the correct option out of three choices that he makes the centrepiece of his history of the “object” of scientific inquiry. Comte argues that it is these three working in tandem that is the root of all social upheaval but it was the last choice, the “positive” one, where he believed hope for social stability lie:

[...] the actual of men’s minds is at bottom due to the simultaneous employment of three radically different incompatible philosophies - the theological, the metaphysical and the positive. It is quite clear that, if any one of these three philosophies really obtained a complete and universal preponderance, a fixed social order would result, whereas the existing evil consists above all in the absence of any true organization [...] positive philosophy is alone destined to prevail in the ordinary course of things. It alone has been making constant progress from many centuries.<sup>348</sup>

Priestley and Bentham’s contributions to the debate will offer a needful complement to the “metaphysics of failure” introduced in the previous chapter. At issue in this section will be the modest success of Priestley’s scientific program and Bentham’s expansion of it in his development of utilitarianism. Their shared project will be shown to be something of an intermediate position between the “negativity”, developed in Sade’s *Les 120 Journées* and what will be shown later as the triumph of “positivity” in his *La philosophie dans le boudoir* (Chapter 5).

What possibly could Comte and Sade have in common? On first glance not much but there is room to see in both their scientific commentaries an implicit joint criticism of d’Alembert and Bacon for their approaches to classify human knowledge. Starting with Comte, he presents what he believes to be the correct method of classification, limited only to “facts” shared across disciplines, “facts” “positive”, attained by “direct observation” (so far d’Alembert and Bacon would agree) but presented with the aim to elucidate through comparisons the depth of the “objects” of concern with recourse only to “homogenous” affinity within fields and not added inflections from individuals in these fields, e.g., their a

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<sup>348</sup> Ibid, 29.

priori conclusions.<sup>349</sup> Comte establishes what can really be called a “negativity” test, which happens to share features with that one Sade introduced in his presentation of “banquets”: “choose and let lie the rest without declaiming against that rest simply because it does not have the power to please you [... c]onsider that it will enchant someone else, and be a philosopher” (p. 78-79). Sade is really presenting here the subjectivity of the knower as “explanandum”; the “explanan”, what can only vanish behind that point of the “eclipse”, to use the Heideggerian conception, introduced at the beginning of this dissertation. It would seem Comte also admonishes d’Alembert and Bacon for not recognizing this “point of eclipse” when they speciously laid out what constitutes the “general” knower:

We are at the present time thoroughly convinced that all the encyclopedic scales – such as those of Bacon and d’Alembert – which are based upon any distinction between the different faculties of the human mind [i.e., memory, reason and imagination], are for that reason alone radically defective. That is true even when this distinction is not, as is often the case, more subtle than real; for in each of its spheres of activity our understanding makes simultaneous use of all its principal faculties.<sup>350</sup>

Of course Comte did not have to surmount this “defect” as speculating on the constitution of the knower was for him off-limits, a realm of “metaphysics” or, in his words, “psychology”, a discipline if it happened to be aimed at oneself amounted to this absurdity: “a thinking individual cannot cut himself in two”.<sup>351</sup> (He could have also added the perennial problem of “interpretation” if aimed at “others”.) However, Sade did aim directly at this limit but did so in pure “negativity” with those modalities at his disposal: passion, sexuality, relations and

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<sup>349</sup> Ibid, 37. \* ‘The principle is a necessary consequence of the only direct application of the positive method to this question of classification, which, like every other question, should be treated as a matter of observation instead of being determined by a priori considerations. The principle is this: classification must proceed from a direct study of the objects to be classified, and must be determined by the real affinities and natural connections that they present. In this way, the classification will itself become the expression of the most general fact which is manifested by a comparison in depth of the objects embraced by it.’ (Full quotation)

<sup>350</sup> Ibid, 36.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid, 21. \* ‘The thinking individual cannot cut himself in two – one of the parts reasoning, while the other is looking on. Since in this case the organ observed and the observing organ are identical, how could any observation be made? The principle of this so-called psychological method is therefore entirely worthless. Besides, consider to what thoroughly contradictory proceedings it immediately leads? On the one hand, you are recommended to isolate yourself as far as possible from the outer world, and you must especially give up all intellectual work; for if you were engaged in making only the simplest calculation, what would become of the interior observation? On the other hand, after having, by means of due slumber, you must then occupy yourself in contemplating the operations that will be taking place in a mind supposed to be blank! Our descendants will no doubt see such pretensions ridiculed on the stage some day.’ (Full quotation)

imagination. This dissertation has presented each one on this list as *exactly* the same and in so doing avoiding the inherent “positivity” coming from their separate treatment in regular noun usage. One of the unique features of Priestley and Bentham is that while avoiding the reductionist trap d’Alembert never overcame they settle in an interesting way somewhere between Sade and Comte.

Priestley’s monistic vision of the natural and human sciences began in one of those now familiar cesspools. John G. McEvoy in “Joseph Priestley, ‘Aerial Philosopher’: Metaphysics and Methodology in Priestley’s Chemical Thought, From 1762-1781” sets up the plot here in the most unassuming of prose:

[...] his chemical career began when he took up residence next to a brewery on his move to Leeds in 1767 [...] his experiments on air were made ‘in consequence of inhabiting a house adjoining a public brewery where I at first amused myself with making experiments on fixed air which I found ready made in *the process of fermentation*.<sup>352</sup>

How many scientific discoveries would Priestley make from these experiments in this brewer adjoining his home? The answer to this question depends on what and what does not constitute “discovery”. This section will endeavour to begin to set up a comprehensive definition but for the time being let the answer to this question be this: Priestley made only one discovery though it would seem by historical accounts that he made numerous. What’s more, were Priestley to break up this one discovery into any plurality, it would fall into these two categories: one, “fixed air”; and two, the moral basis for “social reform”! If Le Mettrie denigrated Needham earlier for “daring to conclude from observations made on a single species (*animalculae*) that the same phenomena must be found in another” (p. 4), Priestley and Bentham were also scientists, who would have come to a like conclusion as Needham. In “States of Mind: Enlightenment and Natural Philosophy”, Simon Schaffer really captures this strange concoction of natural and social sciences in the criticism delivered by Edmund Burke,

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<sup>352</sup> John G. McEvoy, ‘Joseph Priestley, ‘Aerial Philosopher’: Metaphysics and Methodology in Priestley’s Chemical Thought, From 1762-1781’, *Ambix Vol. 25, Part 1*, (March 1978), 2. (Emphasis added)

who would be a chief opponent of these two men's self-styled social reform movement - coined by Priestley as "rational dissent" in 1769 - and would be so all the way up to their open advocacy of radical mobilization for something similar to the French Revolution happening on English soil. Using that now familiar concept, the principle subject of Chapter One, Burke claimed Priestley and Bentham wrote their works in fits of "pneumatic *reve[l]ries*".<sup>353</sup> At the height of the French Revolution, he condensed both men's unabashed "rational dissent" and the tools of their scientific trade as pneumatic chemists into this unified attack:

The natural philosophy of the reformers provided fruitful targets for wit: in a famous figure, Burke compared 'the spirit of liberty in action' to 'the wild gas, the fixed air': 'but we ought to suspend our judgment until the first effervescence is a little subsided, till the liquor is cleared and until we see something deeper than the agitation of a troubled and frothy surface.'<sup>354</sup>

As suggested earlier, the "moral science" of Priestley and Bentham share interesting correlations with that one presented in *Les 120 Journées* - only without the total "failure" of what the book's conclusion would end up being. Priestley and Bentham in their respective scientific approaches will be shown presenting a partially successful metaphysics, anticipating that fully successful one to be introduced later on in this dissertation: Lavoisier's combustion. Before this can be fully explicated, the intermediate phase, to which these "rational dissenters" belong, needs to be foregrounded against what *Les 120 Journées* has already shown to be an abysmal moral collapse, but a collapse that is illuminating.

Comte argues that astronomy was the science best suited to occasion discoveries of the first positive theories, attributing success to how steady observation and experimentation could yield payback once a pattern, or "law", of a phenomenon was uncovered. This payback constituted for Comte a new form of excitation, replacing that old variant: imagination, whose application would have made this same purposive "stargazing" into that "chimerical"

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<sup>353</sup> Simon Shaffer, 'States of Mind: Enlightenment and Natural Philosophy', *The Languages of Psyche: Mind and Body in Enlightenment Thought* (Berkeley: University of California, 1990), 247.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid, 248.

antecedent: astrology.<sup>355</sup> It is no surprise then that astronomy was that one science to progress first and establish “general principles” as the goal for all sciences to emulate. Comte calls Newton’s law of gravity the crowning jewel; here he uses this luminous discovery to set the respective emphasis and de-emphasis for what constitutes a good “positive” explanation: “normal relations of succession and similarity” - and not “real causes”.<sup>356</sup>

On the one hand, this admirable theory shows us all the immense variety of astronomical facts as only a single fact looked at from different points of view, that fact being the constant tendency of all molecules towards each other in direct proportion to their masses and inversely as the squares of their distances. On the other hand, this general fact is shown to be the simple extension of an extremely familiar and therefore, well-known phenomenon - the weight of that body at the earth’s surface. As to determining what attraction and weight are in themselves, or what their causes are - these are questions which we regard as insoluble and outside the domain of the positive philosophy.<sup>357</sup>

However, in the previous chapter, the only important feature that would mark astronomy and astrology as distinct was the quality of the “objects” in focus, ones guided by uniformities (and concomitant perceptual conjunctions in viewers, to use Hume’s words):<sup>358</sup> “these epistemological arcs have been earlier shown to possess a salient “negativity” of relations where subjects both face objects straight on (tropism) and follow circular paths toward others (taxis) the only difference being the degree of “negativity” and “positivity” of those objects pursued” (p. 97). Comte sees chemistry following suit in its rejection of its predecessor, alchemy, debates about “intimate nature[s]” of a chemical phenomenon like heat: is it “material substance” or “vibration of universal ether” (?) were replaced by acquisitions of “positive” facts through the work of scientists like Fourier, facts being what Comte called the “inexhaustible food for the highest form of activity”.<sup>359</sup> Uniformities and these perceptual

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<sup>355</sup> Auguste Comte, op. cit., 6. \* ‘Human reason is now so mature that we are able to undertake laborious scientific researches without having in view any extraneous goal capable of strongly exciting the imagination such as that which the astrologers [...] prosed for themselves. Our intellectual activity is sufficiently excited by the mere hope of discovering the laws of phenomena, by the simple desire of verifying or disproving a theory.’ (Full quotation)

<sup>356</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>357</sup> Ibid.

<sup>358</sup> It is safe to assume that Hume chose to begin his skeptical attack on epistemological certainty by selecting from all the possible ‘uniformities of nature’ one of a cosmological constitution as such are the most conspicuous and reliable, i.e., the guarantee that the sun will rise tomorrow would seem to have the most ironclad certainty.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid, 10.

conjunctions are of course far less salient in these sciences of “cesspools” compared with their cosmological counterparts: “all these sites of slime and stink produced anxiety for all those gazers who saw what was only ever inhospitable to observation and inchoate to comprehension” (p. 75);<sup>360</sup> however, Priestley’s “negative” scientific approach would turn out to be well suited to pneumatic chemistry. This is so despite Comte rejecting outright his approach though apparently in one respect Priestley did do something Comte would have enthusiastically embraced: gather “inexhaustible food” for his positive philosophy or, in other words, accumulate “facts”. The metaphysics of Priestley had a “negative” scientificity similar to that one introduced in *Les 120 Journées*; and before that in the “plenum” developed out of the oeuvre of Rousseau. McEvoy places Priestley in the exact same location as these two although, on this occasion, something quite different emerges from Priestley’s exertion and at first glance it is deceptively un-erotic:

The infinity, inexhaustibility, and “*necessary connection of all things in the system of nature*”, guarantees that every new discovery will reveal new domains of ignorance. Incompleteness is an inevitable characteristic of all works in natural philosophy and “paradoxical as it may seem, this will ever be the case in the progress of natural science, as long as the works of God are like himself, infinite and inexhaustible. Any system will forever be challenged by the proliferation of new facts.”<sup>361</sup>

Priestley here posits a space of “immateriality”, defined of course in this dissertation as a “negative” space of all those now familiar modalities of strict relations (passion, sexuality and imagination); and his placement therein has a metaphysical quality Comte would come to reject as that “extraneous goal capable of exciting the imagination” (footnote #346). This “space of immateriality” has already been shown to be filled with virtue (Rousseau), vice (Sade) and now it is spirituality of that particular monistic quality Priestley (through McEvoy) spoke of as imbued matter as “‘powers of attraction and repulsion’, [...] not

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<sup>360</sup> There were many problems that came when applying mechanical laws of astronomy to those disciplines of minutia like chemistry or biology; one species of problems mentioned earlier were those iatromechanical theories applied to physiology, i.e., Boerhaave and the hydraulic basis for blood.

<sup>361</sup> John G. McEvoy, op. cit., 39. (Emphasis added)



‘imparted to matter’, but ‘necessary to its being’.<sup>362</sup> In this space McEvoy speaks of Priestley seeking out “facts” not as “positivities” of Comte’s treatment: “direct observations [of...] comparison [...] with no added inflections from [...] individuals [...] for example, a priori conclusions” (p. 142) but rather as “analogies”, citing Priestley:

[...] knowledge is a speck of light in the vast darkness of ignorance then “‘greater the circle of light’ [facts illuminate], the ‘greater the boundary of darkness’ [facts to be revealed].<sup>363</sup>

Accordingly, Priestley inserts himself directly as the holder of this “light” rather than deferring to anything outside as would be the case if depending on “hypotheses based on facts”.<sup>364</sup> McEvoy gave to Priestley a “heuristic” underlining to discovery where “negative” attributes of the researcher are paramount, in a word: “interiority” had not yet fully coagulated within Priestley:

[... his] sense of analogy [...] is clearly directed to providing a guide to the workings of the imagination in the discovery of new laws rather than reference to the conditions under which known law can be validly extrapolated.<sup>365</sup>

Priestley’s partial metaphysical success comes by way of discovery being a veritable penetration of nature, i.e., he discovered soda water; and nothing better confirms the generality of this success more than his notion of epistemological egalitarianism and accidental discovery, two parts McEvoy insightfully bundles into one general principle, occluding such cases as discoveries emerging from the particular “genius”:

[d]iscoveries in natural philosophy depend on the ability to take infinite pains in gathering facts; they can therefore be achieved by anybody.<sup>366</sup>

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<sup>362</sup> Ibid, 27. \* ‘Matter, on the one hand, had “been said to be possessed of the property of extension... and also of solidity or impenetrability, but it is said to be naturally destitute of all power whatever...”, since the properties of attraction and repulsion were regarded as the effects of some “foreign power”. Spirit, on the other hand, had been defined as “a substance entirely destitute of all extension, or relation to space, so as to have no property in common with matter, and therefore to be properly immaterial, but to be possessed of the powers of perception, intelligence, and self-motion”. Man’s body consists of matter, to which is “intimately united” the “spirit or immaterial principle” in which the “principles of perception and thought reside”. Priestley rejected these definitions of matter and spirit. He argued the matter is endowed with “powers of attraction and repulsion” which are not properties “imparted to matter” but “necessary to its being”, such that without “it would be nothing at all”.’ (Full quotation)

<sup>363</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>365</sup> Ibid.

This is of course important as one of the metaphysical qualities assigned the “plenum” has been distality rather than proximity (see how Rousseau’s “General Will” inverts Hume’s “sympathy” for a remainder p. 55). What remains next to do is directly compare the partial successes and utter failures of the two “plena” in question, that one, developing out of Priestley’s scientific method (epistemological egalitarianism/ accidental discovery) and later reaching a new development in Bentham’s utilitarianism; the other, seen situated at the heart of Silling Château in *Les 120 Journées*.

In recent times it could be said to have Sade “met” Bentham in Necati Polat’s “Three Contemporaries: The International, Bentham and de Sade”. Polat made out of Sade’s “pain-pleasure” equilibrium a calculus that they argue satisfies Bentham’s principle of utilitarianism:

[much like nerves in sensitivity] feelings of pleasure and pain can be calculated with mathematical precision by taking into account the intensity, duration, probability and frequency of feeling.<sup>367</sup>

In addition, Polat suggested Sade’s belief in the “moral relativity” of local tastes challenge “phantoms [and] disgusting fictions”<sup>368</sup> of top-down authority and offer a model for how economic and social needs evolve in the marketplace, notably, very much like how Jacobs and Hunt saw pornography doing the same for sexual desire. Now that the metaphysical argument this dissertation has set out to explain has reached some level of maturation it is worth reflecting on Polat’s juxtaposition of Sade and Bentham to identify just where his argument goes adrift; and offer an alternative way of seeing how these two men were in fact of similar minds as Polat asserts. The problem plaguing Polat’s treatment comprises the very same mixed terms Foucault applied in seeing Damien’s gruesome fate through the framework of the “body of the King” as Kantorowitz introduced earlier: “[o]pposing terms designating

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<sup>366</sup> Ibid. 36.

<sup>367</sup> Necati Polat, ‘Three Contemporaries: The International, Bentham and de Sade’, *Social Text* 65, Vol. 18, No. 4. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 8.

<sup>368</sup> Ibid, 9.

“negativity”: “[o]pposing terms designating “negativity”: “immaterial”, “liturgical” and “icon” with ones “positive”: “legal foundation” and “representation” has the effect of making all by default equally “positive” if the species of these objects are not given their proper distinguishing qualifications” (p. 125). Polat does something similar in failing for instance to present a nuanced reading of “mimesis” in his effort to make Bentham and Sade cohorts of the then new conception of political theory: “internationalism”:

The mimetic thus signifies the formal, the contingent, the copy, the reproduction, the simulated, the representational, the fantastic, the fictional, the artificial, the common, and so on. The “force of custom” Bentham speaks of, for instance, is mimesis. So is the conventional, the local, fiercely criticized by de Sade, the Enlightenment thinker.<sup>369</sup>

Mimesis has already been presented in this dissertation in two different manners, one emphasizing its “negative” origins: “imitation of nature”, as demonstrated by Sade in his almanac, *Les 120 Journées*, presented in contrast to d’Alembert’s “positive” rendition in *Discours Préliminaire*. The other is the new “performativity” Sade displayed as an “actor” on the “stage” of the French Revolution but, more importantly now, is the increase in “positivity” introduced by Bentham when stricter performance requirements are demanded of the social body, the panopticon, being his representative example. The mimetic orbit for both Sade and Bentham occupy too disparate of positions on the “negativity”-“positivity” scale for equivalence to be declared. In addition, as it was with Foucault, Polat cannot properly distinguish “negative” from “positive” “objects” the consequence being making the whole of the list a series of “positivities”. Unlike “the formal”, “the copy”, “the representational” etc., the “fantastic” and “fictional” belong to the “negative” domain of imagination as does the “common” as Reid asserted in his reflection on what was required to see past the artificiality of “things signified”: “[f]or Reid it was children, artists, *the hoi pollio*, the blind, who could reach [by means of imagination] beyond the pale of appearances and ascertain the ‘force and energy of language’” (p. 98). And what is the consequence of such a lack of differentiation?

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<sup>369</sup> Necati Polat, op. cit., 2.

Polat claiming Sade shared with Bentham a like hostility to the “negative” space of the “local” in favour of the moulding “positive” forces of the emerging marketplace seems entirely unconvincing as these two locations belong to different orbits. Hunt has already asserted a similar point, situating Sade in the French Revolution the prototype for the transmogrification of desire wrought by the new marketplace. Rather than “positivity” to discourse, Sade adds “negativity” by way of a critique, or better, engagement with the conditions of the world in his writing. This point also has the effect of specifying the role Foucault bestows upon Sade as the bridge between the Classical and the Modern ages: the “violence of desire” he brings “batter[ing] at the limits of representations” is in no way the “productive” act as Polat and Hunt would have it but rather a descriptive one especially when taking the entirety of his evolving oeuvre into consideration. This distinction makes all the difference and is ultimately how Bentham and Sade are illuminating in their mutual engagement.

In his description of the transition from the exclusively chemical concern for the vagaries of air in “fixed” or meteorological form (pneumatics) to that more general, monistic principle whereby air enters the realm of the human “soul” (pneumatology), Schaffer offers this convenient summation of the totality of Priestley and Bentham’s projects:

[t]he axiom of utility, the analogy between natural improvement and moral reformation, and the aim of the “security” of respiration were all aspects of the meteorological program, which both Bentham and Priestley pursued.<sup>370</sup>

If Priestley described the “immaterial” space of the “plenum” as epistemological egalitarianism/ accidental discovery, Bentham offered his version in “utility”, laid out in 1780 *Introduction to the principles of morals and legislation*. Though the pneumatological elements in this document appear unapparent at first glance, his initial introduction of utility comes by way of a contrast with a “tyrannical” form where legislation operates according to “sentiments of antipathy and sympathy”. More than just respective emotions of hatred or

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<sup>370</sup> Simon Schaffer, op. cit., 264-65.

magnanimity, these sentiments are the most ancient of meteorological indicators, believed to have imbued objects in both the natural and human worlds:

[t]he principle of sympathy and antipathy is most apt to err on the side of severity [... i]t is for applying punishment in many cases which deserve none.<sup>371</sup>

Foucault took note of these “twins” in his preamble to Don Quixote’s journey away from “similitude” and towards “representation” of the Classical Age: “sympathy” as the “excite[ment of] things of the world to movement [...] draw[ing] even the most distance of them together”,<sup>372</sup> and “antipathy”, what “encloses every species within its impenetrable difference and its propensity to continue being what it is”.<sup>373</sup> These “similitudes” cannot be described as too dissimilar from what has been shown filling the “plenum” as pure relations. However, the problem with application by the ancients is the necessary “coevality” that comes when manipulating what lies inside, in other words, the inevitable failure of interpretation to capture “simultaneity” before the “eclipse.” Reflecting on the terrestrial origins of “pestilences” in Jon Arrizabalaga’s chapter “Facing the Black Death: perceptions and reactions of university medical practitioners”, Agramont could be said to be acting simply on “interpretation” when intimating that to heal a sick patient what is required is to administer an enema:

Agramont also defended the telluric origin of some ‘pestilences’, appearance of which was related to the terrestrial ‘exhalations of fumes’ that provoked earthquakes. These fumes caused a substantial air change through the same process as those from putrid waters [... t]he latter attributed the origin of some pestilences to ‘*putrefactions constricted in the bowels of the earth*’.<sup>374</sup>

Bentham refusing as a starting point such a meteorology of “corruption” is in keeping with a longstanding political line of the “rational dissenters” where the target of general social reform was aimed at just this point, as Schaffer cites Priestley’s opposition to the university

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<sup>371</sup> Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the principles of morals and legislation* (London: T. Payne, and Son, 1789), 29.

<sup>372</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, op. cit., 26.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>374</sup> Jon Arrizabalaga, ‘Facing the Black Death: perceptions and reactions of university medical practitioners’, *Practical Medicine from Salerno to the Black Death* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 256. (Emphasis added)

system of his time: all “resemble pools of stagnant water secured by dams and mounds, and offensive to the neighbourhood”.<sup>375</sup> With the alternative utility comes a subtle shift in priority whereby the same “plenum” of what it replaces (“similitudes”) is held in check with the only difference being an optimism, which can be reduced to neither the *shallowness* of an individual “positive” outlook (proximity) nor the *digitality* d’Holbach presents in his adage: whatever is “congenial to man’s happiness”. Not shallow: just as it was necessary for the architecture of the “plenum” since Rousseau filled out its expanse with his “Social Contract”, optimism reaches its most distal bound when Bentham stretched it out in his own way: “the greatest happiness for the greatest number”. Not digital: in working according to the analogic principle of pain and pleasure: “nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure”,<sup>376</sup> utility is in the right state to fit the “immateriality” of the “plenum”. Bentham described it this way as he seamlessly overlays utility atop the “negativity” of “similitude”:

The only right ground of action, that can possibly subsist, is, after all, the consideration of utility which, if it is a right principle of action, and of approbation, in any one case, is so in every other. Other principles in abundance, that is, other motives, may be the reason why such and such an act has been done: that is, the reason or cause of its being done; but it is this alone that can be the reason why it might or ought to have been done. Antipathy or resentment requires always to be regulated, to prevent its doing mischief: to be regulated by what? Always by the principle of utility. The principle of utility neither requires nor admits of any other regulator than itself.<sup>377</sup>

As already stated in pneumatological terms, utility is both “natural improvement” and “moral reformation”, originating from neither a priori understanding nor external impetus but from their two respective opposites: “accidental discovery” and “epistemological egalitarianism” as described by Priestley. The overall result is that discovery here fits what has already been called partial success: it legitimately penetrates nature though without the accompanying penetration of knowledge. This explains how Priestley (or anyone else) can make discoveries without the need for accompanying knowledge; or why Bentham’s metaphysics of utility provides a sufficiency for all matter - organic and inorganic alike - to act even without

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<sup>375</sup> Simon Schaffer, op. cit., 261.

<sup>376</sup> Jeremy Bentham, op. cit., 13.

<sup>377</sup> Ibid, 32.

recourse to external knowledge. In the case of *Les 120 Journées*, success comes as a reversal of these terms: knowledge is penetrated while nature remained intact all the way up to the departure date from Silling Château. The final result ends up as a chute of total investment and sheer futility, though the insatiable lust of all four “heroes” does reveal something indispensable to an understanding of the nature of knowledge. It is “visceral verballity”.<sup>378</sup> In the interplay between Bentham’s *Introduction* and Sade’s *Les 120 Journées*, “knowing” can now safely be placed amongst those other modalities seen filling up the “plenum”. In closing out this section, it is worth contrasting the epistemological spaces Bentham and Sade establish in their works, spaces that have particular architectural layouts.

Bentham’s panopticon would seem to be a highly complementary architectural space for what Sade had in mind for the activities in Silling Château. On so many occasions the “four heroes” were forced to resort to the “tyranny” Bentham described as “resentment requiring always to regulate, to prevent its doing mischief”; infractions such as unsanctioned visits to the chamber pot, over cleanliness in toilet hygiene and instances of backroom dealing were all rife to occur in the cavernous, enclaved design of Silling Château. It is worth describing some of its more important architectural features. Firstly, there is the semicircular amphitheatre with a stage for all of the four storytellers’ recitals, around whose curved walls were situated four individualized niches for the four spectating “heroes” (and their respective entourages), all of which had rear doors leading to personalized closets, fully furnished “for every kind of impurity” on occasion infamies were “preferred not to [be] execute[d] before everyone”.<sup>379</sup> Then there is the chambers, forming one wing off the amphitheatre, designed for maximum seclusion, soundproof and dim all of the day, meant for “private interviews”, “secluded contests” and for all manners of “secret delights”.<sup>380</sup> Finally, there is that feature architectural space, the dungeon, its entrance a three-hundred stepped spiral staircase beneath

<sup>378</sup> An adjectival description is not warranted as qualities cannot be superadded to what is only insubstantial.

<sup>379</sup> Marquis de Sade, *120 Days*, op. cit., 237-38.

<sup>380</sup> Ibid, 238.

the altar stone of a Christian temple, fortified by a triple door of iron, sealing off all the “cruellest arts” contained within. Sade sums up this latter space this way:

And there below, what tranquillity! To what degree might not the villain be reassured who brought his victim there! What had he to fear? He was out of France, in a safe province, in the depths of an uninhabitable forest, within this forest in a redoubt which, owing to the measures he had taken, only the birds of the air could approach, and he was in the depth of the earth’s entrails. Woe, a hundred times woe to the unlucky creature who in the midst of such abandonment were to find himself at the mercy of a villain lawless and without religion, whom crime amused, and whose only interest lay in his passions, who heeded naught, had nothing to obey but the imperious decrees of his perfidious lusts.<sup>381</sup>

More than just rooms in a building these niches, chambers and this dungeon are all “negative” spaces, whose metaphysical content is being offered up for comparison against what Bentham and Priestley have raised as an alternative to the pneumatology of “corruption”. Whether Foucault realized it or not, his exposition of the historical development of medical and penal hygiene up until the implementation of the Panopticon is so rich in metaphysical allusion his opening case study of how one set of magistrates in one late seventeenth-century French town go about tackling an outbreak of the plague could be a double entendre for the pneumatological differences in Sade and Bentham’s architectural design when this handling of the plague is contrasted with that older treatment of leprosy. On one side, Foucault raises the spectre of the “leper”, whose treatment involved confinement and exclusion: “of exile-enclosure he was left to his doom in the mass among which it was useless to differentiate”;<sup>382</sup> on the other, he narrated one town’s quarantine of the afflicted and saw in its hygienic program a harbinger of Bentham’s panopticon: “those sick of the plague were caught up in a meticulous tactical partitioning in which individual differentiations were the constricting effects of a power that multiplied, articulated and subdivided itself”.<sup>383</sup> St-Martin raised earlier linkages between Sade’s usage of “corruption” in his works and the assumptions of Italian medicine she argued greatly influenced him so it is in no way inappropriate to consider the architectural space of Silling Château to be well suited to

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<sup>381</sup> Ibid, 240.

<sup>382</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, op. cit., 198.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid.



“negative” notions such as miasma and corruption, the kind to which Priestley and Bentham sought an alternative. At issue now, however, is what these two “negative” conceptions of “plenum” space say about an epistemology of discovery. To set up this contrast, it is worth recounting one story from *Les 120 Journées* where one “object of discovery” exemplifies maximum investment, whose result can only be called futile.

Curval in a heated rage “seized her by the hair, overwhelm[ed] her with invectives [...] and] dragged her to his chamber [...] t[ying] her to his bedpost” so that he would not have to wake up in a “lubric furor”, and again go looking for his “object” of desire, who was in flight.<sup>384</sup> The search party had eventually found Adelaide, sitting on Sophie’s bed and Sade describes the discovery this way:

Those two charming girls, united by their similar tender natures, their piety, virtuous sentiment, candor, and absolutely identical amenity, had been seized by the most beautiful affection for each other and they were exchanging comforting words, consoling one other for the dreadful fate that had been reserved for them. No one had perceived their commerce until then, but what followed proved that this was not the first time they had got together, and it was discovered as well that the elder of the two was cultivating the other’s finer sentiments, and had especially pleaded with her not to stray from her religion and her duties towards God, Who would one day comfort and console them for all their woes.<sup>385</sup>

Many aspects of this anecdote of discovery by the four “heroes” in one of these enclaved spaces in Silling Château mark departure points from where Priestley and Bentham would set out to develop their respective pneumatologies. The same “similitudes” are present, the “identical amenity” (sympathies) of these two young girls; tyrannical “regulation”, the tying of Adelaide to the bedpost of Curval’s bed (antipathy); and less obvious, the atmospheric pressure pervading the whole of *Les 120 Journées* as that chute towards incremental depths of “negativity”, cosmology, the organizing logic; and religion, the phases of descent all the way down in this particular discovery of two charming girls in prayer to paroxysm of (Curval’s) blasphemous rage. The unanimous conclusion is that regulations are inadequate:

[t]his fact accounted for the imperfect administration of the household, and arrangements were made whereby, in future, there would always be at least one duenna in the girls’ quarters and another in the boys.<sup>386</sup>

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<sup>384</sup> Ibid, 404.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid, 403-04.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid.

If Newton's most spectacular discoveries followed as Curval's the same *drag* of cosmology and phases of *descent* to religion<sup>387</sup> then Priestley and Bentham, aerial scientists, could be said to be occupying a place outside and for them this was the starting point for their fresh pneumatological approach: "[u]niformities and these perceptual conjunctions are of course far less salient in these sciences of "cesspools" compared with their cosmological counterparts" (p. 146). Bentham (through Schaffer) sums it up this way:

He drew an important contrast between the law of terror, spirits and fictions, and the law of utility, bodies and material interests. The former "drags men to its purpose in chains, from which... the captives break loose in crowds," while the latter "transcendental legislation, leads men by silken threads round their affections and makes them its own for ever."<sup>388</sup>

Cosmology is the former: the "drag" of what can only be the act of being impelled (physically and epistemologically) by "objects" in their orbits ("uniformities of nature"); the "terror, spirits and fictions," the "negative" origins of religion, of the same order of magnitude as these "objects" it shadows as heavenly bodies. Comte described cosmology as the earliest of positive sciences but it is in fact that one imbued with the greatest "negativity" for reasons Bentham here suggests. He would go on to elucidate the vertiginous or, better, centrifugal effect on epistemology of a "negative" order when "captives break[] lose in crowds", a scene not too dissimilar from the four "heroes" discovering in the earlier morning of November 13<sup>th</sup> Adelaide and Sophie praying in a chamber. Bentham's pneumatology is rather the "optimistic" remaking of the plenum whose aim he describes in *Introduction* as: "[the community's] pleasures and [...] security [being] the end and the sole end which the legislator ought to have in view".<sup>389</sup> Knowledge unites all men by "silken threads" tailor-made to wants and needs - not prepossessed as if in an a priori vacuum of what has been shown as 'drag' and "descent" but fashioned by the legislator filling out the entire expanse of the plenum with men equal and improved:

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<sup>387</sup> The astrological speculations that came alongside Newton's cosmological work are well documented by B.J.T. Dobbs in *The Janus Face of Genius: The Role of Alchemy in Newton's Thought*.

<sup>388</sup> Simon Schaffer, op. cit., 277.

<sup>389</sup> Jeremy Bentham, op. cit., 33

[...] the sole standard, in conformity to which each individual ought, as far as depends upon the legislator, to be made to fashion his behaviour.<sup>390</sup>

The ‘silken threads’ are alternatives to ‘iron chains’ of what can now be the tyranny of cosmology and religion, something Bentham conjoins by his use of “antipathy”. Schaffer then ties this contrast with the epistemological spaces set up here as the point of divergence in exploring the architecture of Silling and utility:

The Panopticon, which substituted the illuminated space for inspection for the dark confinement of the dungeon, relied on the power of these “silken threads” [metaphysics of optimism] over subjects’ minds and the knowledge of how they worked.<sup>391</sup>

If the discovery of partial success for Priestley was soda water; for Bentham it was this crafting of the subject’s mind, which should be said to mark a significant moment in the history of “interiority.” The failure for both was that discovery happened without accompanying understanding: soda water was created without understanding the role of oxidization; subjectivities were created in the panopticon but knowledge remained tightly bound to new orders of objects and thus cannot be said to be knowledge *sui generis* (for reasons Hume would give). After all, a panopticon is a surrogate cosmos; and it would take new events for knowledge to be wholly freed and no longer bound by requirements of (natural and social) uniformities. This all anticipates the direction that will lead to understanding a “metaphysics of success” towards the end of this dissertation.

Before arriving at this point, it is worth considering another important dimension of “discovery”, one indexed in both Chapters 1 and 2. Reflecting on Rousseau’s metaphysics of child abandonment, the moral contrast was made between the career paths of his children, who had been destined to be “adventurers and fortune-hunters” before being sent off to be “workers and peasants”. Expediting on the high seas is a significant modality of discovery, one that cannot be overlooked in the period of focus. The scope in knowledge elicited from such epistemological expansion demands a new perspective be crafted for consideration in

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<sup>390</sup> Ibid.

<sup>391</sup> Simon Schaffer, *op. cit.*, 277.

this paper, a perspective top-down when encounters with new cultural centers require accommodation of new systems of knowledge. As a matter of fact, Sade included such a perspective in his œuvre, one complementing the bottom-up line of focus in his *Les 120 Journées*. This perspective was fully developed in Chapter 2.2. But in his travelogue: *Aline et Valcour, ou Le roman philosophique* Sade attempts to navigate knowledge from the top-down. To begin this chapter, however, the extent of Sade's metaphysical plunge into "negativity" will be gaged by considering those other metaphysical explorers of the age: Diderot and Blake, who set sail with a similar "negative" compass of navigation but never reached the same limits that Sade did. Everything developed up until this point: the "plenum", "pneumatology" and the "negative-positive" scale will be shown to apply both theoretically and historically to explorations of the New World.

## Chapter 4

*Aline et Valcourt***4.1 Metaphysical Voyagers**

Captain Cook had long been the ideal companion for would-be adventurers, seeking fame and fortune on the high seas in expeditions to the New World. If it had always been discoveries of new lucrative commercial markets or new lands awaiting stamps of national possession that stimulated excitement, such possibilities by the late eighteenth century had substantially diminished as that geopolitical game had long since reached saturation. What remained left to do to maintain the mystique of adventure was to romanticize in story the perilous task of preserving what colonies one still possessed or set about harassing competitor nations in that murky game of piracy that always oscillated between the threshold of being a legitimate tactic of economic competitiveness and a subaltern lifestyle attracting the most shady of characters from the dregs of society. John Gabriel Stedmen's travelogue *Narrative of a Five Years Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam: in Guiana from the year 1772 to 1777* and Daniel Defoe's *The Life, Adventures and Piracies of the Famous Captain Singleton* capture these two themes in the literature of the period, respectively. But another type of adventurer is oft overlooked, an adventurer, who was as enamored with the feats of Cook as these other opportunistic *materialists'* exploits. Schaffer accounts how in 1771 Bentham had solicited Cook personally to plan a joint voyage to the South Seas; and it was only due to political intervention on the part of Bentham's enemy, Sir William Blackstone, that the plan was scrubbed.<sup>392</sup> One character who did manage to board one of Cook's ships was Sade, through his character Sainville, who, in *Aline et Valcour*, was in search of his kidnapped beloved:

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<sup>392</sup> Simon Schaffer, op. cit., 254.

Dès qu'il eut su l'objet de mon voyage, dès qu'il eut vu le portrait de Léonore, il m'assura qu'une femme absolument semblable à la miniature que je lui faisais voir, était à bord d'un Découverte, second navire anglais, accompagnant Cook, et commandé par le capitaine Clarke, qui venait de mouiller récemment au Cap.<sup>393</sup>

This section will focus on just who these metaphysical voyagers were and how they presented a perspective of colonial expeditions much different than that one often the focus of attention for modern scholars, whose emphasis on the “material” exploitation in colonial policies obscures a much broader discourse. These metaphysical voyages have an enduring history in the literature of the period with pre-Revolutionary examples like Diderot's *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville*; and the cycle of poetry by William Blake including *French Revolution*, *America* and *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, all of which were born out of new sentiment, emerging from the tumult of the French Revolution. It is from such a sampling of reflections on European discovery that *Aline et Valcour* finds its most natural fit for theoretical investigation. Discovery again is more than just about who discovered what where and for what purpose. It only takes Bentham reminding readers in the opening to his preface to *Fragments on Government* that discovery had relevance in pneumatology:

The age we live in is a busy age; in which knowledge is rapidly advancing towards perfection. In the natural Motives of world, in particular, every thing teems with discovery and the present with improvement. The most distant and recondite regions of the earth traversed and explored the *all-vivifying and subtle element of the air* so recently analyzed and made known to us, are striking evidences, were all others wanting, of this pleasing truth.<sup>394</sup>

He goes on to describe in the next paragraph discovery as a cognate of improvement<sup>395</sup> and, with awareness of the previous section still fresh in mind, improvement also has very particular metaphysical meaning beyond the materialism that often fills in for both its motive and description. This unsung dimension is often overlooked in Sade as well especially in his reflections on the French Revolution in *Aline et Valcour*. Discourses on geographical discovery will share many of the same parallels as those one, discussed already in the context

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<sup>393</sup> Marquis de Sade, *Aline et Valcour* (Troisième Partie), (London: Emereo Publishing, 2012), 34.

<sup>394</sup> Jeremy Bentham, *Fragment on Government* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1791), 93. (Emphasis added)

<sup>395</sup> Ibid.

of scientific discoveries; so throughout this section efforts will be made to treat both indistinguishably.

In critical literature on the history of European discovery plant science has played a surprising role in framing what constitutes the machinery of improvement. One contributor to the critique of the field of eighteenth-century horticulture is Jill H. Casid, who, in *Sowing Landscape: Landscape and Colonization*, persuasively argues that colonial gardening was central to the success of the European colonization project. John M. MacKenzie in his review of her work sums up her assertion this way:

[e]mpire was everywhere written upon landscapes [... i]ts relationships of class, race, and power were reflected in its gardens and in its productive spaces, creating ‘psychogeographies’ [...].<sup>396</sup>

Improvement here has already had its preamble in the “materialist” approaches of those groups of adventurers, whose sole purpose for discovery was either national prestige, economic gain or the moral defence to continue both these pursuits. Desire (in the marketplace) and ideology have both been discussed at different points in this dissertation; and they have all been given “positive” bases so synonymy with “materialism” should not be surprising. Critical emphasis on “material” improvement has often obscured that other “negative” type just as important in the history of European discovery, that one that was the focus of study for that one luminary of the Lunar Society of Birmingham, Priestley; and his affiliate Bentham, based out of London. Differentiating between these two types is a necessary step going forward as vegetation happens to play a significant role in their “negative” conceptualization of discovery as well. In support of Priestley and Bentham, another luminary from the Lunar Society will be called upon, one, who would have engaged with many of the same themes: Erasmus Darwin.

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<sup>396</sup> John M. MacKenzie, [Book Review] Jill H. Casid. *Sowing Landscape: Landscape and Colonization*, (The International History Review, Vol. 28, No. 3, Sept 2006), 616.

La Mettrie offered a portrait of plant life well suited to the tastes of a cosmopolitan audience in tuned with trendy discourses on science:

The earth is not only the plants' nurse; it is also in a way their dressmaker. It is not satisfied with suckling them, but also clothes them. With the same juices that nourish them, it can spin garment to cover them. Such is the corolla I have mentioned, which is decorated with the most beautiful colours. The corolla of man, and *above all* woman, consists in garments and different ornaments, during the daytime, for at night they are flowers almost without any covering.<sup>397</sup>

One can imagine here a *bon vivant*, accompanied by his lady, venturing into a commercial district for a dress fitting in preparation for an evening's soiree. The gentlemen must be well attired but not to the same extent as ("above all") his companion, who by the stroke of midnight once the gaiety of the evening's activities have wound down will end up "without cover" beside him in bed - as the custom goes. In her chapter "The Private Lives of Plants" Londa Schiebinger traces the transition from how these "corolla" were originally "wedding gowns"<sup>398</sup> for chaste brides in Linnaeus' characterization to something much more debonair, worthy to be worn to one of La Mettrie's soirees and discarded by night's end. Schiebinger situates the science of "plant sexuality [first] in Linnaeus' system t[aking] place almost exclusively within the bonds of marriage"<sup>399</sup> and then sees it shift to audiences of high society where fluency in science was a mark of germaneness. This audience would have been, at the least, tolerant of underhanded violations of Christian virtue in discussions of science; and, at the most, delighted by the kind of pornographic display, rife in La Mettrie's lectures on botany:

[...] plants pulsating with heat with like passion to animals male plants shaking like a man copulating, their semen/ grains of dust covering fervidly stamens of the [female] flower.<sup>400</sup>

If Hunt was shown presenting Sade earlier as the productive force behind that transmogrification of desire in the marketplace once the family compact had collapsed with

<sup>397</sup> La Mettrie, 'Man as Plant', op. cit., 83-84. (Emphasis added)

<sup>398</sup> Londa Schiebinger, 'Private Lives of Plants', *Nature's Body: Sexual Politics and the Making of Modern Science* (London: HarperCollinsPublishers, 1993), 23.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>400</sup> Le Mettrie, 'Man as Plant', op. cit., 79.



the fall of the King's family during the French Revolution, Schiebinger presents Erasmus Darwin as something of a similar figure but from the side of plant "desire":

Darwin's plants, unlike Linnaeus's, did not limit sexual relations to the bonds of matrimony. Rather, they freely expressed every imaginable form of heterosexual union. The fair *Collinsonia*, sighting the sweet concern, satisfied the love of two brothers by turns. The *Meadia* (an ordinary cowslip) bowed with "wanton air" rolled her dark eyes, and waved her golden hair as she gratified each of her five beaux. Three youthful swains succumbed to the riper years of the *Gloriosa*. For Darwin, *sex was not just the mechanism for improving and diversifying the stock of living organisms, it was also the purest source of happiness* – "the cordial drop in the otherwise vapid cup of life".<sup>401</sup>

The use of Darwin as the representative of what Schiebinger calls an "economy of nature" is interesting, though problematic, as what is not explicitly stated in her presentation was the close company he shared with Priestley and Bentham. Her linking Darwin and his poetry to an economics of fashion far outweighs any consideration of the metaphysics that would have been more in line with the company he kept; and her singling out "happiness" in these licentious plant displays over what she calls "mechanism for improving and diversifying the stock of living organisms" raises an artificial distinction as the "free love" model had a sufficient "positivity" to be considered a basis of the economic order. One need only be reminded of how Smith left room for fashion in the workings of "division of labour" (p. 49) or how desire was always open to further "positive articulation" as Rousseau demonstrated in his account of Grimm's rise to fame. Schiebinger describes the economy this way:

[s]ex was no longer seen as a sin or vice, but as part of the economy of nature - a natural impulse that should find free expression. Free love was not only discussed among elites, it was practiced.<sup>402</sup>

Though always open to vagaries of interpretation and use in the marketplace of ideas, Darwin's poetry in proximity to Priestley and Bentham would have had a far different reading. In "Economy of Vegetation", the first part of Erasmus' poem, *The Botanical Garden*, flowers are very much not lusty members of coterie of high society but the "negative"

<sup>401</sup> Londa Schiebinger, op. cit., 30-31. (Emphasis added)

<sup>402</sup> Ibid, 33. \* 'As Roy Porter has argued, the Enlightenment had also ushered in more tolerant views of human sexuality. Sex was no longer seen as a sin or vice, but as part of the economy of nature – a natural impulse that should find free expression. Free love was not only discussed among elites, it was practiced: pornographic journals began appearing from the 1770s; erotic novels proliferated; men of substance walked in public with their mistresses; bastards grew up as accepted members of the family (though without inheriting the family name or property). Fanny Hill even spoke of the penis as a "sensitive plant [...]"'. (Full quotation)

archetype for all orders of life coming up from chaos and then blooming in all manners of technological and social improvements. Even a steam-powered water pump, or, in his words, a “Giant-Power”, digging for minerals in industry, can be an underground vine:

[That] forms earth’s remotest caves/ Lifts with strong arm her dark reluctant waves; / Each cavern’d rock, and hidden den explores, / Drags her dark Coals, and digs her shining ores.<sup>403</sup>

Using accompanying philosophical notes to various poetic expressions, Darwin confirms below that lexica of pneumatology including such “negative” terms as heat and germination, expressed as deep-seated sexuality, all of which are now familiar features of cesspools:

I. “NYMPHS OF PRIMEVAL FIRE!”<sup>404</sup> YOUR vestal train/ Hung with gold-tresses o’er the vast inane,/ Pierced with your silver shafts the throne of Night,/ And charm’d young Nature’s opening eyes with light;/ When LOVE DIVINE,<sup>405</sup> with brooding wings unfurl’d [...] Call’d from the rude abyss the living world./ “— LET THERE BE LIGHT!” proclaim’d the ALMIGHTY LORD,/ Astonished Chaos heard the potent word [...],<sup>406</sup>

To be fair to Schiebinger, she does propose an alternative tradition to reading the more titillating parts in Darwin’s poetry. She does cite Laqueur and that older Galenic “one sex” model (that one mentioned on p. 41 of this dissertation); however, she see the new science of sex as materialist, more interested in weights and measure of sexual difference.<sup>407</sup> Perhaps this was apt for someone like La Mettrie but not Darwin and the company he kept. Receptions to colonization in the New World actually bore a similar mark of “positivity” seen

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<sup>403</sup> Erasmus Darwin, *The Botanical Garden: The Economy of Vegetation* (The Project Gutenberg EBook, 2011), 1.i.264-266)

<sup>404</sup> ‘The fluid matter of heat is perhaps the most extensive element in nature; all other bodies are immersed in it, and are preserved in their present state of solidity or fluidity by the attraction of their particles to the matter of heat. Since all known bodies are contractible into less space by depriving them of some portion of their heat, and as there is no part of nature totally deprived of heat, there is reason to believe that the particles of bodies do not touch, but are held towards each other by their self-attraction, and recede from each other by their attraction to the mass of heat which surrounds them; and thus exist in an equilibrium between these two powers. If more of the matter of heat be applied to them, they recede further from each other, and become fluid; if still more be applied, they take an aerial form, and are termed Gasses by the modern chemists’ (Ibid, note to 1.i.97). (Full quotation)

<sup>405</sup> ‘From having observed the gradual evolution of the young animal or plant from its egg or seed; and afterwards its successive advances to its more perfect state, or maturity; philosophers of all ages seem to have imagined, that the great world itself had likewise its infancy and its gradual progress to maturity; this seems to have given origin to the very antient [sic] and sublime allegory of Eros, or Divine Love, producing the world from the egg of Night, as it floated in Chaos. (Ibid, note to 1.i.101)’ (Full quotation)

<sup>406</sup> Ibid, 1.i.97-1.i.104.

<sup>407</sup> Londa Schiebinger, op. cit., 37-38.

underpinning the popularization of science, and success hinged on another conception of plant life.

Casid argued that aesthetic choices in “dressing” European colonization had a far greater effect on its durability than any policy, economic, political or otherwise. She develops her position from a gardening principle as ancient as it is pervasive in the perceptual ordering of objects in the history of Western culture. She summed up this principle as that pentateuchal prohibition against intermixing species of plants and animals, which she introduces in her reflection on James Grainger’s, *The Sugar-Cane*, a poem that broached the issue:

The ghostly trace of miscegenation and imperial guilt are there. The appeal to “so God ordains” is likely an effort to keep at bay the theologically based criticism of hybridization encapsulated in the two laws from Leviticus that declare “Do not mate different kinds of animals” and “Do not plant your fields with two kinds of seeds”.<sup>408</sup>

She focuses on printmaking and its ability to reify the logic of colonization, and the race relations that naturally fell under its sway.<sup>409</sup> Reproducibility is one such formal feature that iterates the persuasive illusion amongst consumers that plantations’ operations depend on systems of colonial ordering and arrangement - not coercive slave labour, which actually was the case.<sup>410</sup> Artificial and ubiquitous, this illusion allowed consumers to feast their eyes on the “business-as-usual” workings of the empire and even erupt with the same moral outrage and pity when the system showed signs of breakage, for example, during a slave revolt.

Marcus Wood in “John Gabriel Stedman, William Blake, Francesco Bartolozzi and

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<sup>408</sup> Jill H. Casid, *Sowing Landscape, Landscape and Colonization* (Minnesota: Minnesota University Press, 2005), 16.

<sup>409</sup> It is important to note that Casid sees two different gardening strategies employed by the colonial planners of the English and French Empires though at their bases they both function on the same principle of avoiding miscegenation. She described the French model as turning on ‘disindigenating, transplanting, and hybridizing their Caribbean island possessions such that the island were in a sense emptied out and then repossessed by agricultural spectacle, the show of the landscape machinery and its produce’ (Jill H. Casid, op. cit., 32). Because sugar plantations of the French Antilles were monocultures there would have been no need to apply the English technology of ‘picturesque intermixing’. Landscape technologies like grafting and transplanting guaranteed that the seed of what was ‘French’ would thrive unadulterated in the colonial setting; and hybridizing ensured invariable heritability of the two plant species joined where original constitutions are held intact and not intermixed.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid, p. 12.

empathetic pornography in the *Narrative of a Five Years Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam*", argues that this emotional response was a matter of economics, just as Smith had done in his conception of "economy of sympathy" in *Theory of Moral Sentiment*.<sup>411</sup> Wood repeats Smith's example of another human sentiment able to be "positively articulated": the degree of one's moral fitness even before the spectacle of horrific violence.<sup>412</sup> In "Vegetable Pornography: The 'Moral' (Scientific) Debate surrounding Francesco Bartolozzi's 'Stipple Gardens' and William Blake's 'Vegetable Earth' in John Gabriel Stedman's Surinam Travelogue", Joseph Blessin presents another "logic" of printmaking where chiaroscurist engraving styles like stipple, mezzotint and aquatint actually reproduce prohibitions on miscegenation. In the soft interplay between whites and blacks on metal plates or prints a double-leveled prestidigitation is achieved, on the first level, with paint pigments; the second, skin pigments. As was the case for colored points that work against each other to create the illusion of harmony on metal sheets:

[...] slaves [and their families] in [...] field[s] partitioned from [...] slave-own[ing] famil[ies...] worked at ease [...] with sign of neither backbreaking toil nor inevitable familial estrangement.<sup>413</sup>

The colonial garden of Casid's reflection promises both illusions of perennial abundance (reproducibility) and a well-balanced composition of variety (chiaroscuro). She offers this florid description:

[...] glowing red... scarlet cordiums, the verdant bowers of the Jessamine and Grenadilla vines, the tufted plumes of lilac, the silver white and silky leaves of that portalandia... and prodigious variety of minor fruits and

<sup>411</sup> Marcus Wood, 'John Gabriel Stedman, William Blake, Francesco Bartolozzi and empathetic pornography in the Narrative of a Five Years Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam', *An Economy of Colour: Visual Culture and the Atlantic World, 1660-1883* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 135.

\* 'Pain is seen to exist in an immediate and isolated present, [but] its very incommunicability makes it into the key site for the individual witness's exploration, or testing, of the capacity for sympathy - the central measure to the degree of an individual's moral development' (Cited by Wood). (Full quotation)

<sup>412</sup> Ibid. \* Wood speaks specifically to Stedman's moral posturing throughout this travelogue where he narrates his high capacity for sensibility that enables him to feel more pain and suffering than the slaves, dying before his eyes - this is so despite the fact that as a mercenary he would have been complicit in the violence of this suppression of a slave revolt.

<sup>413</sup> Joseph Blessin, "Vegetable Pornography": The 'Moral' (Scientific) Debate surrounding Francesco Bartolozzi's 'Stipple Gardens' and William Blake's 'Vegetable Earth' in John Gabriel Stedman's Surinam Travelogue', *Rethinking the Erotic: Eroticism in Literature in Literature, Film, Art and Society*, Sara D'Arcy, Paulina Nalewajko, Katarzyna Popek-Barnet (eds.) (Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2014), 1.

lowly shrubs, all together compose an embroidery of colors, which few regions can rival and none can perhaps surpass.<sup>414</sup>

The colonial garden presented here bears the hallmark of that same “dressmaker” spinning the logic of plant anatomy mentioned in the earlier discussion of popular science and fashion; and now as before the same “positive” scaffolding applies. Plantation landscape was a well-maintained garden where flowers present their colors singularly, grouped preferably according to respective species. If seen from a distance an arrangement like this would be guaranteed vividness and clarity in the viewer’s overall impression, falling otherwise into obscurity if colors are mixed amongst different species. At a closer proximity colors of varying species may be set side by side in more suggestive ways but, overall, the good gardener must balance all ranges between these two perspectival extremes, seducing viewers only so much as colors are singularly discernible. All the flowers, being perennial, needed periodic maintenance: the pulling of weeds and sharpening of transitions when blurring between flower species occurred. These gardening principles had scalar application: from the chiaroscuro used to promote images to European consumers all the way up to the architectural and discursive segregation of races, necessary for the operation of the whole of the colonial project. These principles show up for Hume, the “horticulturalist”, as well.

Hume gives his own formulation of “gardens”, which too depends on elements constitutively “positive”:

[...] my senses convey to me only the impressions of colour’s points, dispos’d in a certain manner. If the eye is sensible of *any thing further*, I desire *it may be pointed out* to me. But if it be impossible to shew any thing farther, we may conclude with certainty, that the idea of extension is nothing but a copy of these colour’d points, and of the manner of their appearance.<sup>415</sup>

At play in Hume’s garden are one-to-one relations between impressions and ideas. And if eyes seek this “any thing further” and demand “it be pointed out” what is beyond vivid and clear impressions or ideas, the realm entered is one of obscurity, whose points of entry Hume

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<sup>414</sup> Jill H. Casid, op. cit., 10-11.

<sup>415</sup> David Hume, op. cit., 83.

famously seals off with his lock of skepticism. It is in the uniformity of these impressions and ideas in cultural forms where “perennial” states take hold, giving to the dimension of time its own “positive” quality. But Darwin would see something troubling within the interstices of these “colour’d points” and identify perennality as the ease of gliding over and seeing uniformity in tradition:

When Avarice, shrouded in Religion’s robe,/ Sail’d to the West, and slaughter’s half the globe;/ While Superstition, stalking by this side [...].<sup>416</sup>

And what quickly follows in behind these “dressmakers” of the “robes” of priests and popes are colonial gardeners, who uphold the marketplace with their own prestidigitation of color, which hide something much more ominous:

Hear, oh BRITANNIA! potent Queen of isles,/ On whom fair Art, and meek Religion smiles,/ Now AFRIC’S coasts thy craftier sons invade/ With murder, rapine, theft,-- and call it Trade!/ -- The SLAVE, in chains, on supplicating knee,/ Spreads his wide arms, and lifts his eyes to Thee;/ With hunger pale, with wounds and toil oppress’d/ “ARE WE NOT BRETHREN?” *sorrow choaks the rest*; -- Air! [...]<sup>417</sup>

The previous section demonstrated that for Priestley and Bentham interstices were also places of fester (p. 157), giving off this same “choaking” air Darwin saw suffocating this slave in chains. For members of the Lunar Society, the gardening techniques used could be the difference between who, amongst individuals and societies, had healthy pneumatological states and who did not; and in exploring botanical discourses in both science and economics the formal choices deciding states seems to break down into what is either “positive” or “negative”. “Positivity” has been shown to have an artificiality inviting what Priestley called “pools of stagnant water”, the breeding ground for all sorts of pathogens individual and social while “negativity” has been presented as a germ of life stretching monistically from the smallest of plant seeds all the way up to blossoming human improvement. At all stages there is discovery and hidden behind each of the plant’s folds serendipities await a blessed humanity. Voyages to the New World were caught up in this same optimism but, as has been shown, concern for weather was more than just about wind in ships’ sails or safe passage

<sup>416</sup> Erasmus Darwin, op. cit., 1.ii.415-417.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid, 1. ii. 421-428. [Emphasis added]

around treacherous coastlines; it was fundamentally concerned about the meteorology of the human heart. These voyages had some famous antecedents and would-be successors when Sade (through Sainville) set sail from Italy with a 15-crew felucca and headed towards the coast of North Africa. Two in particular are noteworthy to mention at the outset as they both establish particular “negative” parameters not shared with voyages, guided by the “materialist” ambitions seen earlier. The captains are Denis Diderot and William Blake.

Exploring the region known today as Oceania in the South Seas, Diderot, through the alphabetic characters A and B, gives his justification for how it was even possible from the comfort of his own armchair in France to accompany Admiral Bougainville, giving old meaning to the idiom “armchair general”, or, better, “armchair admiral”:

[...] si le vaisseau n'est qu'une maison flottante, et si vous considérez le navigateur qui traverse des espaces immenses, resserré et immobile dans une enceinte assez étroite, vous le verrez faisant le tour du globe sur une planche, comme vous et moi le tour de l'univers sur notre parquet.<sup>418</sup>

In his memoir, *Le voyage autour du monde*, Bougainville presents himself as that “materialist” discoverer<sup>419</sup> founding colonies like Malouine (modern day Falkland Islands) for the glory of the French empire - ensuring to adorn the new settlement with that “stamp of possession”<sup>420</sup> - and doing something Dena Goodman would take particular note of in “The Structure of Political Argument in Diderot’s *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville*”:

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<sup>418</sup> Denis Diderot, *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville ou Dialogue entre A. et B. sur l'inconvénient d'attacher des idées morales à certaines actions physiques qui n'en comportent pas* (Chicoutimi: la Bibliothèque Paul Émile-Boulet de l'Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, 2002), 5.

<sup>419</sup> As mentioned in footnote #409 Casid gave the French colonial project a slightly more nuanced reading compared to its English counterpart. But one thing for certain is that Casid holds both to the same ‘materialist’ vision of discovery presented in this section. Rather than explore the notion of ‘metaphysical voyagers’ Casid finds her point of critique in examining plantation landscape of already colonized spaces: ‘The views produced out of the voyages of Cook and Bougainville to the South Pacific constitute a favoured site for cultural criticism. The problem with viewing these voyages in isolation is that references to these circumnavigations of the globe were the very devices used in metropolitan landscape gardens and paintings of the period to resignify slavery, conquest, and colonization in the discourse of ostensible discovery and hence, renewal. Focusing not on the island Eden or the claimed voyages of “discovery” but the already colonized sites, the sugar plantations of the French Antilles and specifically Saint-Domingue, allows us to see colonial landscape’s devices of disavowal and displacement for what they are’ (Casid, op. cit., 27-28).

<sup>420</sup> Lous-Antoine de Bougainville, *A Voyage around the World*, London: Printed for J. Nourse, Bookseller to HIS MAJESTY, in the Strand: and T. DAVIES, Bookseller to the Royal Academy, in Russel-street, Covent-garden.

M DCC LXXII), 31. \* ‘The king's effigy adorned one of its sides, and under its foundations we buried some coins, together with a medal, on one side of which was graved the date of the undertaking, and on the other the figure of the king, with these words for the exergue, ‘Tibi serviat ultima Thule.’ (Full quotation)

Bougainville gathered “facts”. Facts have already been given special attention in the introduction of this dissertation with Riskin “establish[ing] “sensibilité” as a salient “renunciation of [the] understanding” that comes from [them] (p. 19). Bougainville had accumulated many “facts” during his voyage including cartographical ones like his correction of the location of Brazil from a noted interpolation of movement of fish stocks and patterns of currents<sup>421</sup> but, more important for this section, ethnographical observations gathered from his encounter with indigenous peoples such as those in Tahiti. In the following passage he connects the serene condition of the inhabitants with the state of the climate:

[...] what better proofs can we desire of the salubrity of the air, and the good regimen which the inhabitants observe, than the health and strength of these same islanders, who inhabit huts exposed to all the winds, and hardly cover the earth which serves them as a bed with a few leaves; the happy old age to which they attain without feeling any of its inconveniences; the acuteness of all their senses; and lastly, the singular beauty of their teeth, which they keep even in the most advanced age?<sup>422</sup>

Dena Goodman identifies the manoeuvre Diderot makes on his “maison flottante”, wresting a place beside Bougainville in the Admiral’s quarters: he subordinated *facts* gathered from a real voyage to an exotic land to the ability to extract from these ‘facts’ proper conclusions.<sup>423</sup>

The deployment of Diderot’s imagination is in keeping with the “negative” parameters of that science unique of the period. It is worth extracting some key features firstly from *Supplément* in anticipation of discussions of *Aline et Valcour* later.

In the introduction to *Supplément* Diderot wrote like the eighteenth-century version of a travel agent when situating Bougainville in a climate of such contrast from his homeland

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<sup>421</sup> Ibid, 17. \* ‘It has long ago been a complaint among navigators, and still continues, that the charts, and especially those of M. Bellin, lay down the coasts of Brasil too much to the eastward. They ground this complaint upon their having got sight of these coasts in their several voyages, when they thought themselves at least eighty or a hundred leagues off. They add, that they have several times observed on these coasts, that the currants had carried them S.W. and they rather choose to tax the charts and astronomical observations as erroneous, than suspect their ships reckoning subject to mistakes. Upon the like reasonings we might have concluded the contrary on our course to Rio de la Plata, if by chance we had not discovered the reason of the variations N. which we met with. It was evident that the bank with the fry of fish, that we met with the 29th, was subject to the direction of a current; and its distance from the coast proved, that the current had already existed several days. It was therefore the cause of constant errors in our course; and the currents which navigators have often found to set in to the S. W. on these shores, are subject to variations, and some-times take contrary directions.’ (Full quotation).

<sup>422</sup> Ibid, 121.

<sup>423</sup> Dana Goodman, ‘The Structure of Political Argument in Diderot’s *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville*’, (Diderot Studies, Vol. 21, 1983), 124.



the comparison could only mean for the onlooker that one was witnessing something truly exotic. Diderot describes in curious detail a thick island fog with such “suffisamment chargée d’humidité” it hangs not in the atmosphere but just above the earth (“retombe sur la terre”) creating a quality in the air of such low density that even a chemist would take notice.<sup>424</sup> This is much different than the air particularly thick in Bougainville’s France, a thickness with that now familiar “positive” quality, the “choaking air” Darwin described, or the air, which Scheibinger identified with genteel “free love” overlain with the same “weights and measures of materialist science” (p. 163) seen here:

Bougainville a le goût des amusements de la société. Il aime les femmes, les spectacles, les repas délicats. Il se prête au tourbillon du monde d’aussi bonne grâce qu’aux inconstances de l’élément sur lequel il a été ballotté. Il est aimable et gai. C’est un véritable Français, lesté d’un bord d’un *Traité de calcul différentiel et intégral*, et de l’autre d’un *Voyage autour du globe*.<sup>425</sup>

Many of the motifs of “free love” already outlined resemble those same ones Hunt sees as not only the points of attack against key characters and typologies of the ancient regime in the run-up to the French Revolution, i.e., the “corruption of morals” of a venereal, impotent, degenerate privileged class<sup>426</sup> - but also the accretions formed from the democratization of desire, fostered by pamphleteers hawking the latest in pornographic propaganda to the Parisian hoi polloi, transforming political “activism” into something not “simply displacement or substitution for ‘real’ politics”.<sup>427</sup> In *Supplément* Diderot applies “free love” to far different ends. This is particularly evident in his reflections on libertinage, incest and

<sup>424</sup> Diderot, *Supplément*, op. cit., 5. \* ‘A - Le brouillard est si épais qu’il nous dérobe la vue des arbres voisins. B - Il est vrai ; mais si ce brouillard qui ne reste dans la partie inférieure de l’atmosphère que parce qu’elle est suffisamment chargée d’humidité, retombe sur la terre ? A - Mais si au contraire il traverse l’éponge, s’élève et gagne la région supérieure où l’air est moins dense et peut, comme disent les chimistes, n’être pas saturé ?’ (Full quotation)

<sup>425</sup> Ibid, 6. (Emphasis added)

<sup>426</sup> Hunt speaks of divers themes in pornographic literature that depicts the ruling class in all forms of corruption. One example she gives is the pamphlet ‘L’autrichienne en goguettes’ presenting Marie Antoinette in a ménage à trois with Count d’Artois (king’s brother) and the duchesse de Polignac after the king had passed out drunk. The duchess complains Antoinette favours the Count over her in the exchange so she takes up masturbating using that pornographic bestseller of the century *Histoire de Dom Bougre, portier des Chartreux* as a sexual aid. Impotence, defect and effeminacy often collapsed into the rubric homosexuality as in *Les Enfants de Sodome à l’Assemblée Nationale* where clerical and aristocratic deputies of the National Assembly sodomize one another as a matter of political procedure. The caption reads: “Ce Trio Masculin, dans ses goûts ingénieux, Vous retrace Ô ; Lecteurs des vrai Bougr.. les Jeux” (This masculine trio, with its ingenious tastes, recalls for you the readers the games of true buggers) (Hunt, ‘Pornography and the French Revolution’, op. cit., 307-08).

<sup>427</sup> Lynn Hunt, ‘Pornography and the French Revolution’, op. cit., 308.

polygamy. In one of the exchanges on the topic of comparative mores between the French and the Tahitians a chaplain (L'aumonier) asks his Tahitian guide, Orou, whether or not libertinage existed amongst his tribe. Orou offers a “negative” framing of the answer, circumventing any positive prescription implied in the question; and embedded in the subsequent moral outrage the prejudicial chaplain displays upon hearing Orou’s answer. Orou splits libertinage into two forms. The first comes as the necessity for a man, whose wife is with child, to continue propagating his most esteemed attributes for the good of both his unborn child and the tribe’s progeny:

Notre enfant n'a honte que d'un mauvais choix. Tu dois concevoir quel prix nous attachons à la santé, à la beauté, à la force, à l'industrie, au courage ; tu dois concevoir comment, sans que nous nous en mêlions, les prérogatives du sang doivent s'éterniser parmi nous.<sup>428</sup>

The second form comes in those instances, punishable by tribal code, when natural impediments to propagation are flagrantly brushed aside as in cases of desire expressed in and for the sterile, the deformed, the aged and those afflicted with the “maladie périodique” (menstruation).<sup>429</sup> In both these forms of libertinage it is generation - if not fermentation - that is privileged over prejudice as moral prescriptions; and Diderot verifies here St-Martin’s earlier suggestion that libertinage be a surrogate for the principle of nature:

[...] le libertin, sur qui se fonde la coherence textuelle, est un être malade (fièvres [...] troubles érectiles, maladies vénériennes, cancer).<sup>430</sup>

Diderot privileges, however, generation over fermentation in adding the second form to the ledger of “châtiment”, that is, those leaving their home without a “voile noir” to deceptively seduce those of healthy constitution were subject to “l'exil au nord de l'île ou l'esclavage.”<sup>431</sup> This measure evinces the limit to how far Diderot was willing to extend libertinage, a limit Sade would

<sup>428</sup> Diderot, *Supplément*, op. cit., 33.

<sup>429</sup> Ibid. \* ‘OROU - Le sign de la stérilité, vice de naissance ou suite de l'âge avancé. Celle qui quitte ce voile et se mêle avec les hommes est une libertine. Celui qui relève ce voile et s'approche de la femme stérile est un libertin. L'AUMONIER - Et ces voiles gris? OROU - Le signe de la maladie périodique. Celle qui quitte ce voile et se mêle avec les hommes est une libertine. Celui qui le relève et s'approche de la femme malade est un libertin.’ (Full quotation)

<sup>430</sup> Armelle St-Martin, *De la médecine chez Sade*, op. cit., 387.

<sup>431</sup> Diderot, *Supplément*, op. cit., 36. \* Diderot reveals the punishment for raising the “grey veil” of sterility when discussing the issue of incest between a sister and a brother before the sister is ready to conceive.

surpass when subordinating generation to its connate: fermentation. On the topic of incest Diderot again applies the “generation rule” for special cases amongst the Otaïti: when premature death takes either a father leaving behind a wife and healthy sons; or a mother, a husband and healthy daughters;<sup>432</sup> a son’s preference for older women;<sup>433</sup> or when a father with an ugly daughter wants to give her needed practice in the art of love-making to enhance her value to a potential suitor: “Si son père l’aime, il s’occupe à lui préparer sa dot en enfants”.<sup>434</sup> For incest between brothers and sisters when the possibility of generation between siblings is impossible biologically (the “voile gris”), Orou explains how any blame would fall on the parents for lack of supervision but adds that the community sees in precocious sibling love the future health of the tribe:

Des femmes à qui le temps de la grossesse paraît long ; des femmes et des filles peu scrupuleuses à garder leur voile gris; mais dans le fait nous n’attachons pas une grande importance à toutes ces fautes, et tu ne saurais croire combien l’idée de richesse particulière ou publique unie dans nos têtes à l’idée de population épure nos mœurs sur ce point.<sup>435</sup>

To all these well-reasoned arguments where generation is of utmost importance the chaplain sees only vice, which “[...] menace la constitution politique”.<sup>436</sup> He sees jealousy as a natural law, the most basic source of all social upheaval:

La passion de deux hommes pour une même femme, ou le goût de deux femmes ou de deux filles pour un même homme n’occasionnent-ils point de désordres?<sup>437</sup>

In A and B eavesdropping on this very peculiar cross-cultural exchange on the topic of “free love” two divergent positions become clear: the French one, which is highly developed yet given over to artifice; and the Otaïti, indigenous and still governed by natural law. Goodman sees Diderot recommending France seek wisdom from both these cultural emissaries. Diderot condemns France for how jealousy and artifice produce such formations as “private property,

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<sup>432</sup> Ibid, 35.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid. \* ‘A moins qu’il n’ait beaucoup de respect pour elle et une tendresse qui lui fasse oublier la disparité d’âge et préférer une femme de quarante ans à une fille de dix-neuf.’ (Full quotation)

<sup>434</sup> Ibid.

<sup>435</sup> Ibid, 36.

<sup>436</sup> Ibid.

<sup>437</sup> Ibid

creation of false moralities, of laws, of customs, of philosophy, of religious institutions”<sup>438</sup> and puts all in the crosshairs for political reform; however, he does so with this caveat that would lessen his swing towards Orou’s side:

[...] although reason is the culprit, it must also be the saviour, undoing the damage it has done, and doing so through political reform.<sup>439</sup>

Free love is presented here in a much different manner than Schiebinger and Hunt’s “positive” focus. Diderot shows here how a voyage to the New World could be spurred by much more than “material” gain; there was a boon of metaphysical insight awaiting discovery.

David V. Erdman in *Blake: Prophet against Empire* reflects on what could have been a successful release had Blake only managed better the timing and marketing of his 1791 poem *French Revolution*. In Erdman’s eyes, the deficiencies of handling this poem set Blake adrift in that trademark “involute symbolism and obscure manner” of his later works.<sup>440</sup> However, having such deficiencies raises the possibility of immunity to pervasive influences of the marketplace whose “positive articulations” have already been shown to co-opt messaging otherwise meant for different purposes. Schiebinger has already demonstrated this in the case of how Erasmus Darwin’s science was received by his public (p. 152). Now if Diderot makes it his aim to fight back (so to speak) with “proper conclusions” to what Bougainville, a savvy populariser of discovery, reveals as “facts,” is there any substance to Erdman’s regretful tone in Blake’s work largely going unnoticed in his day? Perhaps he would have wanted his message to be unadulterated? Evidence shows that Blake like Darwin would have made popular engagement a priority but not for popularity’s sake. In “Scientific Amusements: Literary Representations of the Birmingham Lunar Society” Pam Perkins sees Blake himself encouraging scientists to engage their publics with their respective crafts even if the results were not always what they expected. Referring to a scene in Blake’s satirical

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<sup>438</sup> Dana Goodman, op. cit., 133.

<sup>439</sup> Ibid.

<sup>440</sup> David V. Erdman, *Blake Prophet against Empire: A Poet’s Interpretation of the History of His Own time* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969), 153.

poem, *Island in the Moon*, Perkin did not read scientists as jeopardizing public health in a mishap like the one the character, *Inflammable Gass* makes, mishandling an air pump, breaking a flask containing the plague and causing the on-lookers of the spectacle to flee for their lives; but rather he reads it as augmenting public health by making science socially transparent.<sup>441</sup> *Inflammable Gass* stands alone amongst other solipsistic characters like *Pythagorean* who “endeavour[s] to incorporate [his] soul with [his] bod[y]”;<sup>442</sup> *Obtuse Angle*, who “underst[an]d[s] better when he shut his eyes”;<sup>443</sup> and *The Antiquarian*, who defends that populariser of science, Voltaire, as “immersed in matter, & seems to have understood very little but what he saw before his eyes, like the Animal upon the Pythagoreans laps always playing with its own tail”.<sup>444</sup> Aptly, possessing the same religious zeal and evangelical outreach as Priestley, *Inflammable Gass* defends Mrs Sigtagatist’s justification for attending church against detractors in the group (like the character *Nannicantipot*); he even intervenes on her behalf in the midst of a hostile exchange:

You [Nannicantipot] would [knock down the minister Mr Huffcap and run away] You Ignorant jade I wish I could see you hit any of the ministers, you deserve to have yours ears boxed you do. – I’m [Nannicantipot] sure this is not religion answers the [...] others – Then Mr Inflammable Gass ran & shovd his head into the fire & set his [...] hair all in a flame & ran about the room— No No he did not I was only making a fool of you.<sup>445</sup>

This dual concern for public interest and criticism of “popularisers” of science like Voltaire are hallmark tactics of the Dissenting Rationalists, whose pneumatological mission was presented earlier under the aegis of Priestley and Bentham. The question of Blake’s proximity to these contemporaries and their scientific coterie, which includes, of course, Darwin, remains somewhat of an open question even today. Whatever the historical link may be Blake’s poetry is undoubtedly infused with the same pneumatological focus, which is part

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<sup>441</sup> Pam Perkins, ‘Scientific Amusements: Literary Representations of the Birmingham Lunar Society’, *Lumen: Selected Proceedings from the Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies* / *Lumen: travaux choisis de la Société canadienne d’étude du dix-huitième siècle*, vol. 25 (Montreal: Érudit, 2006), 63.

<sup>442</sup> William Blake, ‘An Island in the Moon’, *The Complete Poetry & Prose of William Blake* (New York: Anchor Books Doubleday, 1988), 450.

<sup>443</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>444</sup> *Ibid*, 451.

<sup>445</sup> *Ibid*, 452-53.

outreach in the manner of Darwin; part criticism, actually a much more intensified metaphysical version of Diderot's voyage to the New World.

Blake's metaphysical voyage to the New World has nothing of the touristy trappings Diderot presented in *Supplément* though something of the same contrastive meteorological reports are issued along with figures playing similar roles as A and B, anchoring a metaphysical narrative to something happening in real-time, in Diderot's case a discussion amongst two erudite thinkers. Blake's entire narrative is strewn over numerous poems, some short; others long, written over a decade plus period with linkages no more than resonances, fitting for any project of poetry. The "A and B" entry point in Blake's narrative takes place in *The French Revolution* (1791) where the Bastille and the character, Fayette, are the only two figures grounded in world-historical time, all others are or would be either metaphysical offshoots of these two, or articulations of like form of other world-historical figures, for example, Isaac Newton, who will appear shortly. The first meteorological report comes as one from the Bastille, accompanied by its metaphysical guardian, the Duke of Burgundy, the ideal figure of a once confident monarchic absolutism long since withered and replaced by a vestige so impotent a mass of French protesters are able to gather at the walls of this proud fortress and audaciously issue lists of demands of their own. The Duke makes his own demands in reply:

Seest thou yonder dark castle, that *moated* around, keeps this city of Paris in awe. Go command yonder tower, saying, Bastille depart, and take thy shadowy course. Overstep the *dark river*, thou terrible tower, and get thee up into the country ten miles. And thou *black* southern prison, move along the *dusky* road to Versailles; there/ *Frown on the gardens*, and if it obey and depart, then the King will disband/ this *war-breathing* army; but if it refuse, let the Nation's Assembly thence learn, That this army of terrors, that prison of horrors, are the bands of murmuring kingdoms.<sup>446</sup>

The second world-historical figure is Fayette, who resides in these "gardens" to be "frowned" upon and he issues a directive by the authority of the National Assembly that the army must retreat even without the Duke's demands being met:

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<sup>446</sup> William Blake, 'French Revolution', op. cit., 297. (Emphasis added)

And the vote was, that Fayette should order the army to remove ten miles from Paris./ The aged sun rises appall'd from dark mountains, and gleams a dusky beam [...].<sup>447</sup>

The fecund air of the Assembly's garden and the beams of the rising sun after the vote; the miasma of the moated boundary of the Bastille and the breath of the Duke's war horses are of like juxtaposition to how Diderot contrasts the low density fog hugging the fertile ground in Tahiti and the thickness of air of Bougainville's homeland that enters into his ship, a thickness, which ascends beyond mere literality, impinging on the metaphysical realm. This corruption was stated earlier in this citation: "Il aime les femmes, les spectacles, les repas délicats. Il se prête au tourbillon du monde d'aussi bonne grâce qu'aux inconstances de l'élément sur lequel il a été ballotté" (p. 169). To capture the corruption and sterility implied by this meteorological description, one need only remember the "voile gris" of non-reproductive sexuality, punishable by Tahitian law as that unacceptable form of libertinage; and even earlier to Rousseau's dietary plan for Julie (delivered through Wolmar) (p. 52) where sparsity of what is readily available is esteemed; indulgence of what is scarce, panned:

Our meals are plain, but choice; and nothing is wanting to make ours a sumptuous table, but the transporting it a hundred leagues off; in which case every thing would be delicate, every thing would be rare [...].<sup>448</sup>

The Bastille in *A Song of Liberty* would see its miasmal quality take on figurative significance as a site firstly concrete-historical but drifting later to disembodied-empty time when all forms of corruption from Rome to London to the slave routes of Africa irrespective of periodicity cease to be after the "Storming":

[s]purning the clouds written with curses, stamps the stony laws to dust, loosing the eternal horses from the dens of night, crying/ Empire is no more! And now the lion & wolf shall cease.<sup>449</sup>

Fayette would too make his own metaphysical transition, ultimately as a hesitating hero, representing revolutionary fervour suddenly halted and given over to residual loyalty to the privilege embodied by the *Ancien Regime*, the moment of compromise being a chance

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<sup>447</sup> Ibid, 298. \* 'While they vote the removal of War, and the pestilence weighs his red wings in sky./ So Fayette stood silent among the Assembly, and the votes were given and the numbers numb'red; And the vote was, that Fayette should order the army to remove ten miles from Paris./ The aged sun rises appall'd from dark mountains, and gleams a dusky beam [...].' (Full quotation)

<sup>448</sup> Rousseau, *La nouvelle Héloïse*, op. cit., 213.

<sup>449</sup> William Blake, 'A Song of Liberty', op. cit., 45.

encounter with Marie Antoinette on a balcony where upon Lafayette showing the customary respects (kneeling and kissing the sovereign's hand):

Fayette beheld the Queen to smile/ And wink her lovely eye/ And soon he saw the pestilence From street to street fly.<sup>450</sup>

If A and B in real time bear witness to a metaphysical discussion between Orou, of the Otaïti tribe; and L'aumonier, in *Vision of the Daughters of Albion*, Blake introduces his metaphysical dialogue as a drama, featuring an "Orou"-type character, the autochthonous mixed-blood<sup>451</sup> girl, Oothoon; a cameo by the Bastille, presented as Oothoon's slavedriver, Bromion; and Fayette, featured as Theotormon, Oothoon's jealous lover. Erdman explains the interaction between all three characters this way:

[...] supplied by the oratory of Oothoon, a female slave, free in spirit but physically bound; Bromion, the slave-driver who owns her and has raped her to increase her market value; and Theotormon, her jealous but inhibited lover who fails to recognize her divine humanity . . . the frustrated lover . . . being analogous to the wavering abolitionist who cannot bring himself openly to condemn slavery although he deplores the trade.<sup>452</sup>

Three themes present here are inflections of issues already raised by Diderot in the dialogue between L'aumonier and Orou. The first comes by way of the artifice A and B see in French society as the basis of "private property, creation of false moralities, of laws, of customs, of philosophy, of religious institutions" (p. 173-74), which Blake presents as Bromion's raping bed. The second comes as jealousy, the principle worry for L'aumonier (but not, Orou) and the basis of the hesitation afflicting Fayette in the presence of Maria Antoinette; and now Theotormon, who can neither stand up to Bromion nor for his lover, Oothoon. Lastly, it is Oothoon, who embodies the same generative sexuality Diderot described as the basis of sexual mores amongst the Otaïti:

Art thou a flower! Art thou a nymph! [...] I dare not pluck thee from thy dewy bed! The Golden nymph replied; pluck thou my flower Oothoon the mild/ Another flower shall spring, because the soul of sweet delight Can

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<sup>450</sup> William Blake, 'Lafayette', *Poems from the Rossetti Manuscript* (Blackmask Online Collection e-book) (Honolulu: WorldLibrary.net, 2001), 19.

<sup>451</sup> Erdman describes this character as the embodiment of femininity of all races of the world. He argues: '[...] Oothoon is not a person but a "soul". Pictured in chains she is the female slave, but she does not have the black skin and tight ringlets of the Africa[n ... she] is the American Indian [...] with loose black hair, sad mouth, and angular limbs [...] yet her skin is not copper [...] but theoretically "snowy" white, according to the text' (David V. Erdman, op. cit., 239).

<sup>452</sup> David V. Erdman, op. cit., 228.



never pass away. She ceas'd & closd her gold shrine/ Then Oothoon pluck'd the flower saying, I pluck thee from thy bed Sweet flower, and put thee there to glow between my breasts/ And thus I turn my face to where my whole soul seeks.<sup>453</sup>

This last description would later become the meteorological terrain of America and all its fecundity in the Preludium of the eponymous poem, the source of revolutionary fervour once the Orc has awoken:

When pestilence is shot from heaven [...] Their awful folds in the dark air; silent she stood as night [...] But dumb till the dread day when Orc assay'd his fierce embrace.<sup>454</sup>

Starting with the miasma of the Bastille and moving to the bounty of the American plains Blake establishes the meteorological backdrop for his metaphysical voyage to the New World. Like any backdrop, however, what is still needed is a stage for an ultimate conflict; and it is here where Urizen faces off against Los, with the fate of humanity hanging in the balance. The dispensation for this ultimate conflict has a vegetal dimension in being a return to an Edenic motif, articulated by Blake as Golganooza. The bombast aside, Blake is taking serious accounts of the state of human knowledge of his day; and it all falls on those now familiar camps: “positive” and “negative” science.

Urizen is first introduced in *Visions of the Daughter of Albion* as the “Creator of men” by what appears to be the same weights and measures Schiebinger speaks of when modelling the “economy of nature” on “free love”:

Thy joys are tears! Thy labour vain, to form men to thine image/ How can one joy absorb another? are not different joys/ Holy, eternal, infinite! And each joy is a Love.<sup>455</sup>

It only takes the reminder of Rousseau's presentation of Grimm that something inherently relational (and thus “negative”) can appear in “positive” formation, i.e., “different joys”, “a Love”; and it takes Blake's reminder that this again (as Smith pointed out earlier) is the product of “labour” in the marketplace. Blake considered it ominous indeed for “positivity” to encroach on what is otherwise “negative terrain”; and Donald Ault, in *Visionary Physics*:

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<sup>453</sup> William Blake, ‘Visions of the Daughters of Albion’, op. cit., 46.

<sup>454</sup> William Blake, ‘America, a Prophecy’, op. cit., 51.

<sup>455</sup> Ibid., 48.

*Blake's Response to Newton*, elegantly comes to the heart of the issue, and presents a concern that happens also to fall in line with the contention this dissertation aims to develop:

Science [...] is least dangerous when it is obviously partial and reductive, and most dangerous when it most closely approximates the complete and definite structure of the Imagination itself. At such a point apocalypse must take place. Such is the case with Blake's vision of Newton's system.<sup>456</sup>

If Diderot gave Bougainville's scientific "facts" a density set apart from the low humidity of Tahiti: "C'est un véritable Français, lesté d'un bord d'un *Traité de calcul différentiel et intégral*, et de l'autre d'un *Voyage autour du globe*" (p. 171) then Blake too would place such "facts" on the miasmal side of the pneumatological ledger. The conceptions the two writers lay on this side of the ledger share important similarities. For Diderot, it was the sterility of those amongst the Otaïti that constitute the miasma, those, who defy the tribal injunction to wear the "voile noir" or "gris" and go out in public to seduce those of healthy constitution, stealing in process what is otherwise fecund seed. For Blake, sterility and seductiveness are qualities belonging to Urizen, who too goes into the world, dissimulating fecundity, in his case through operations of the "positive" sciences of the day. Take his formal introduction in Blake's *The [First] Book of Urizen*:

It is Urizen, But known, abstracted Brooding secret, the dark power hid./ Times on time, he divides, & measur'd/ Space by space in his ninefold darkness Unseen, unknown! Changes appear'd/ In his desolate mountains rifted furious/ By the black winds of perturbation.<sup>457</sup>

Earlier Darwin saw something of this same miasma hidden behind similar mensurations and divisions, feigning germination: "[he] would see something troubling within the interstices of these "colour'd points"; and identify perennality [of reproduction] as the ease of gliding over and seeing uniformity in tradition" (p. 168). If this is here the "Times on time" division Ault even attributes to Hume;<sup>458</sup> the "Space by space" is Newton's universe, that Berkeley also

<sup>456</sup> Donault Ault, *Visionary Physics: Blake's Response to Newton* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 30.

<sup>457</sup> William Blake, 'The [First] Book of Urizen', op. cit., 70

<sup>458</sup> Ault lays out this connection concerning temporality this way: '[...] Hume's argument that our idea of cause is no more than habituation to seeing similar events followed by other similar events. Hume, however, assumes that we can never know beyond this causal chain, which takes on meaning through our memory. Blake, however, not only sees the relation between our memory and the meaning of events, but also sees that the attempt by the

criticized for the fluxions he saw buried in his calculus leading to those infinite quantifiabilities, or “positivities”, leaving open crypts strewn all over the natural and human worlds, whose ferment he animates with allusion to the undead:

[...] he used Fluxions, like the Scaffold of a building, as things to be laid aside or got rid of, as soon as finite Lines were found proportional to them. But then these finite Exponents are found by the help of Fluxions... And what are these Fluxions? The Velocities of evanescent Increments? And what are these evanescent Increments? They are neither finite Quantities nor Quantities infinitely small, nor yet nothing. May we not call them the *Ghosts* of departed Quantities?<sup>459</sup>

Ault described how these fluxions reduce to scientific objects but he could have also included in his list the artistic chiaroscuro of Casid’s thesis, which was also ‘fleeting and indefinite abstracted perceptual particulars’.<sup>460</sup> Citing Blake’s poem *Jerusalem*, Ault emphasizes this shared ground this way:

Art & Science cannot exist in minutely organized Particulars/ And not in generalizing Demonstrations of the Rational Power. The Infinite alone resides in Definite & Determinate Identity.<sup>461</sup>

For Diderot it was the “generation rule” of the Otaïti that be the object lesson for French society, the basis for political reform; for Blake, it was this “Definite & Determinate” American girl, Oothoon, whose “happy copulation”<sup>462</sup> was not only the truth buried beneath the dual affliction “Bromion” and “Theotormon” wrought but also the prophecy of Los’ plan for redemption through a cosmological revolution beginning on the American plains, culminating in the poetic finale, *Jerusalem* on the grounds of the garden of Golgonooza. In *The [First] Book of Urizen* this final battle finds its harbinger. After the “Oothoon”-like figure, Enitharmon, gives birth to Orc, Urizen kidnaps him and binds him to a rock on the top of a mountain as it is foreknown this infant is the promise of the rescinding of Urizen’s power.

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memory to set up an idea of causality has an analogy with the constantly variable ratios in Newton’s calculus’ (Donald Ault, op. cit., 122).

<sup>459</sup> George Berkeley, *The Analyst* (Calgary: Theophania Publishing, 2011), 30. (Emphasis added)

<sup>460</sup> Donald Ault, op. cit., 65.

<sup>461</sup> Ibid.

<sup>462</sup> William Blake, ‘Visions of the Daughter of Albion’, op. cit., 50. \* ‘Then is Oothoon a whore indeed! And all the virgin joys/ Or life are harlots: and Theotormon is a sick mans dream/ And Oothoon is the crafty slave of selfish holiness/ But Oothoon is not so, a virgin fill’d with virgin fancies/ Open to joy and to delight where every beauty appears/ If in the morning sun I find it: there my eyes are fix’d/ In happy copulation, if in evening mild, wearied with work; Sit on a bank and draw the pleasures of this free born joy.’ (Full quotation)

The conflict even at this nascent stage in Blake's imagination already breaks to what is either the sterility of "positivity; or the fertility of "negativity"

They took Orc to the top of a mountain. / O how Enitharmon wept! They chain'd his young limbs to the rock  
With the Chain of Jealousy/ Beneath Urizens dreadful shadow [...] And Urizen craving with Hunger/ Stung with  
the odor of Nature/ Explor'd his den around/ He form'd a line & a plummet/ To divide the Abyss beneath. He  
form'd a dividing rule: / He formed scales to weigh;/ He formed massy weights; He formed a brazen quadrant; /  
He formed golden compasses/ And began to explore the Abyss/ And he planted a garden of fruits/ But Los  
encircled Enitharmon/ With fires of Prophecy/ From the sight of Urizen & Orc/ And she bore an enormous  
race.<sup>463</sup>

As it was for Diderot and his political reform, revolution for Blake had this same pneumatological beginning: healthy germination; and all the necessary meteorological conditions. But the depths of "negativity" in this dissertation have often descended beneath this fertile bedrock; reaching well into the murkiness of all manners of sterility. Firstly, it was Rousseau and his metaphysics of incest (with Madame Warnes, p. 69) and his metaphysics of child-abandonment (p. 71); then, it was Sade, who, likewise, made incest a point of intense focus along with all its divers forms (non-reproductive libertinage) including his own answer to Rousseau sending every child he ever begot to the poorhouse: infanticide. In shifting to *Aline et Valcour* it is worth considering Sade alongside the metaphysical voyagers: Diderot and Blake, and use the extent of their "negativity" to indicate just how far Sade descended.

#### 4.2 Sade and the Kingdoms of Butua and Tamoe

In the opening statement to his first chapter of *The Revolutionary Ideas of the Marquis de Sade* Geoffrey Gore speculates about William Blake writing Sade into his poem *The French Revolution* placing him alongside other characters like Fayette and Newton:

The Bastille trembles [...] And the den named Horror held a man Chained hand and foot, round his neck an iron band, bound to the impregnable wall[;] In his soul was the serpent coil'd round his heart, hid from the light, as in a cleft rock; And the man was confined for a writing prophetic.<sup>464</sup>

Even if Blake had someone else in mind in this prison cell in the Bastille Gorer's comparison is still compelling given what the two authors shared as a similar "negative" approach and how their characters matter very little as individuals in world-historical time. Like Diderot

<sup>463</sup> William Blake, 'The [First] Book of Urizen', op. cit., 80-81.

<sup>464</sup> Geoffrey Gorer, *The Revolutionary Ideas of the Marquis de Sade* (London: Wishart & Co., 1934), 23.

and Blake, Sade travelled to the New World on his own “maison flottante”; and shared similar interests in meteorology, renunciations of scientific facts; and extolling of sexual musings in attempts to answer difficult philosophical quandaries. *Aline et Valcour* was originally written in the Bastille but was only published in altered form in 1795, changes Sade (through Lever) justifies this way:

[...] some minor corrections [were made] so as to give the work ‘that male and severe physiognomy that is appropriate to a free nation.’<sup>465</sup>

As it was with Diderot, the book has a whole cast of “A” and “B” characters, who occupy real (albeit fictitious) time. Sade includes Valcour as a fill-in for himself and even provides an extensive biography for this character in Tome 1, which ends up being a version of what is Sade’s own autobiography. These characters are then linked to metaphysical ones in Tome II some with actual ties of consanguinity with those characters in Tome I: Léonore (Tome II) turns out to be the unknown daughter of the villain, Président de Blamont (Tome I) and Sainville, Léonore’s lover, as well as the surrogate for Valcour (and hence Aline’s lover), is a family friend that even ends up commemorating Aline and her mother Madame de Blamont after their tragic deaths at the end of the book.<sup>466</sup> Some characters have strictly metaphysical ties: Président de Blamont is part the malevolent King of the anthropophagic African kingdom of Butua in Tome II; part, the king’s interlocutor, Sarmiento, an apologist for libertinage. Unlike reformer Diderot, Sade and Blake were both partisans of the French Revolution and Argus-eyed witness of its narrative, unfolding in real-time before their eyes. *Aline et Valcour* is Sade’s literary answer to it just as much as poems from *The French Revolution* (1791) to *Jerusalem* (1804) were Blake’s answer. However, the depth of “negativity” has already placed Sade on different terrain vis-à-vis Diderot and Blake (as the previous section has shown). In bringing this chapter to its culmination it is worth briefly

<sup>465</sup> Maurice Lever, op. cit., 475.

<sup>466</sup> He builds a ‘mausolée superbe dans l’église de Vertfeuille, dont les attributs sont: la Constance, la Piété, la Foi conjugale et l’Amour, plaçant des couronnes de myrtes et de roses sur la tête de ces deux femmes infortunées, qu’on voit serrées dans les bras l’une de l’autre’ (Sade, *Aline et Valcour*, 1108-1109).

laying out just how Sade envisaged the revolution unfolding, which happens also to come through metaphysical voyages of his own to two contrastive kingdoms in Tome II of his novel: the malevolent African Kingdom of Butua and the South Pacific island kingdom of Tamoe, ruled by the benevolent ruler, Zamé. How *Aline et Valcour* has been read by theorists in posterity needs considering before arriving at the metaphysical meaning of these destinations.

The first critic of *Aline et Valcour* was Renée Pélagie Cordier de Montreuil, the Marquise de Sade. In one epistolary correspondence with her husband, in which she critiques with notable vigour the first draft, written in the Bastille, she establishes the point of entry for how future reviewers would approach the work. Taking issue with how she saw her husband too enamoured with the amorality of anthropologists of the day, she argues that a law passed by the government of a foreign land condoning say incest or sodomy does not make it right even after having passed scrutiny of its highest legal body. What matters is nature's pronouncement of the necessity to reproduce.<sup>467</sup> The following rebuttal by Madame de Sade recapitulates by index the basis of Sade's metaphysical project, the one explored in this dissertation since opening up the inquiry in Chapter 2: "Sodom":

The moral and physical constitutions of people are infinitely varied. Why that? Because people do not built on a truth principle, and *truth requires unity*; passions being varied, and being the principle of different peoples which follow them stupidly without reasoning, variety therefore produces these contrasts. The multiplicity of these cannot be a conclusion in their favour.<sup>468</sup>

Anne Brousteau in "La Perversion de la Forme Épistolaire" carried this same concern for unity into the modern critique of the work, mentioning Jean-Louis Cornille's scathing rebuke that where other epistolary works succeed in melding together an otherwise disjunctive letter format through believable synergisms of addressers and addressees:

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<sup>467</sup> Renée Pélagie Cordier de Montreuil, Marquise de Sade, 'Observation on Aline and Valcour' (title given to translation of letter by Colette V. Michael), *Sade: His Ethics and Rhetoric* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1989), 29. \* 'About your comparison of a government which would forbid its people to wear a hat, if this was done, it would be an infraction of the law but not a crime, just like marrying one's own sister would be a crime and not an infraction of the law. Even if the law allowed it, sodomy is a crime against nature, since it prevents reproduction [...].' (Full quotation)

<sup>468</sup> Ibid. (Emphasis added)

*Aline et Valcour* fut un cuisant échec sur ce plan, tant les imbroglios y paraissent invraisemblables, les narrations incompatibles avec la form épistolaire choisie.<sup>469</sup>

Brousteau mentions some “perversion du genre” that would have struck Cornille including the interchangeability of all the story’s virtuous characters: letters are often written “à quatre mains” or addressed to multiple intended readers “de manière à créer une véritable solidarité épistolaire et sentimentale à l’intérieur du group”. She also mentions the conspicuous absence of intrigue on the part of the libertines: Président de Blamant and Dolbourg, who bluntly reveal their plot in letter without “le potential de perversité que recèle la letter comme l’a admirablement montré Laclos”.<sup>470</sup> Just as characters are here ill-formed and out of sync with the unity of literary convention Brousteau sees Sade’s novel as a whole being a brio of genres and intellectual traditions<sup>471</sup> never fully integrated, in her words: “hétérogénéité thématique, générique”.<sup>472</sup> The demand for unity of both Madame de Sade and Jean-Louis Cornille is really an inversion of how d’Alembert aimed to order human knowledge in that bottom-up arrangement of the Encyclopaedic project: it is the “encyclopaedic arrangement of words, or *rather objects* through which sciences [and arts] come together and communicate with one another [...]” (p. 91). Sade’s warning to readers to be philosophical and take *Les 120 Journées* as a banquet of six hundred different plates<sup>473</sup> is a bottom-up call of rebuke to d’Alembert; and in the “avis de l’éditeur” to *Aline et Valcour* Sade issues his *top-down* rebuke:

Le contraste de ces deux gouvernements [les royaumes de Butua et Tamoé] plaira sans doute, et nous sommes bien parfaitement convaincus de l’intérêt qu’il doit produire. Nous attendons le même effet de la liaison de tous les personnages établis dans ces lettres, et du rapport, plein d’art, que les uns ont avec les autres, malgré leur

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<sup>469</sup> Anne Brousteau, ‘La Perversion de la Forme Épistolaire’, *Sade en toutes lettres autour d’Aline et Valcour* (Paris: Éditions Desjonquères, 2004), 32.

<sup>470</sup> Ibid, 34-35. \* Brousteau argues that in the case of the virtuous characters ‘[l]es lettres sont ainsi des sortes de lettres ouvertes, qu bannissent toute dissimulation du camp de la vertu’ (Ibid, 35); in the case of the libertines, first citing Sade ‘letter est le portrait de l’âme’, Brousteau argues the absence of intrigue was ‘Sade renonc[ant] à toute ambiguïté épistolaire’ (Ibid).

<sup>471</sup> Brousteau described this brio this way: ‘[p]résentés comme les tours du monde faits en sens inverse par les deux amants lance à recherché l’un de l’autre, ils proposent un panorama complet des différents systèmes religieux, politiques, philosophiques et érotiques rencontrés au cours de ces périples’ (Ibid, 37). (Full quotation)

<sup>472</sup> Ibid.

<sup>473</sup> Sade, *120 Day*, op. cit., 254.

étonnante disproportion. Leur principes devaient être opposés comme leur physionomie, et si l'on s'est permis d'en établir de bien forts, cela n'a jamais été que pour faire voir avec quel ascendant [...].<sup>474</sup>

Sade even chides those readers who cannot tolerate the cacophony of voices the book presents - calling them:

[...] esclaves des préjugés et de l'habitude, ils feront voir que rien n'agit en eux que l'opinion, et que le flambeau de la philosophie ne luira jamais à leurs yeux.<sup>475</sup>

And Madame de Sade recognizes the built-in equivocation in Sade's justification for showing this cacophony unresolved, a cacophony that does nothing to inoculate virtuous readers to the wiliness of corrupt characters but only fosters new explorations into further corruption, these portrayals of verisimilitudinous evil.<sup>476</sup> As was the case for *Les 120 Journées*, Sade is here no longer aiming at that now familiar "elliptic limit" at rock bottom where d'Alembert consolidates the "positive" base for the Encyclopedia, the one Sade dismantled earlier in his illustration of that "grave and learned professor of Scholasticism at the Sorbonne" who likes swallowing belches (p. 90). This time Sade is reaching for the top, those grand systems purporting "positive" unity: religious, political, cultural or otherwise. What this scholastic professor from Sorbonne was for d'Alembert; the kingdoms of Butua and Tamoé are for those designs to unify the world in the "Age of Discovery"; and by extension those cacophonous voices both instigating and later contesting the Revolution, ones, with which Sade was all too familiar at the time of his writing *Aline et Valcour* in the Bastille; and editing and publishing it in the midst of the Revolution in order to showcase his revolutionary stripes:

Ce que cet ouvrage a de singulier encore, c'est d'avoir été fait à la Bastille [...] la manière dont, écrasé par le despotisme ministerial, notre auteur prévoyait la Révolution, est fort extraordinaire.<sup>477</sup>

<sup>474</sup> Sade, 'Aline et Valcour', *Œuvres de Sade, Volume 1* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1990), 388.

<sup>475</sup> Ibid.

<sup>476</sup> Renée Pélagie Cordier de Montreuil, Marquise de Sade, 'Observation on Aline and Valcour', op. cit., 28. \* 'It is necessary, you will say, to make them known in order to best be able to protect oneself against them and detest them. This is true, but when it is only for this purpose that one works, there is a point where it must be stopped in order not to give depraved minds the means for further corruption. These details render the novel illegible for honest people, and this regrettable.' (Full quotation)

<sup>477</sup> Sade, 'Aline et Valcour', op. cit., 388.



Sade presents this epistolary novel/ travelogue in a manner quite different than those discussed so far in this chapter; however, one tie that binds all these novels together is the interest in inflecting arguments with salient pneumatological qualities.

For Sade, the metaphysical voyager, that thickness of air Diderot told belonged to Bougainville's ship when arriving on the fair-weathered island of Tahiti, is actually given a geographical location in *Aline et Valcour*, in Africa, in what is now modern-day Zimbabwe. In his unplanned arrival in the kingdom of Butua, Sainville was greeted with these weather conditions:

[...] le rest de l'année est d'une si cruelle ardeur, qu'il n'est pas rare de trouver des animaux dans la champagne expirer sous les rayons qui les brûlent; c'est à l'extrême chaleur de ce climat qu'il faut attribuer, sans doute, la corruption morale de ces peuples; on ne se dout pas du point auquel les influence de l'air agissent sur le physique de l'homme, combine il peut être honnête ou vicieux, en raison du plus ou moins d'air qui pèse sur ses poumons [...] O vous qui croyez devoir assujettir tous les homes aux memes loix, quelque soient les variation de l'atmosphère [...]<sup>478</sup>

If Bougainville's "*Traité de calcul différentiel et intégral*" was left on board his ship when he set out to discover Tahiti, in Butua Sade infuses the whole kingdom with the same "positive" thickness already argued was an attribute of science. On first glance, the notion that Butua is a site of scientificity rings just as absurd as seeing France and Spain sharing Butua's meteorological conditions.<sup>479</sup> However, in "*L'Anthropologie Religieuse Dans Le Voyage de Sainville et Léonore*" Aurélia Hollart draws together these otherwise disparate geographies this way:

[...] le] style ethnographique concour[t] à l'assimilation d'un discours parallèle, où la legend se mêle au discours scientifique pour brouiller les frontier et jour [...] sur le credit de l'invérifiable.<sup>480</sup>

Hollart presents Sainville and Sarmiento in Butua gathering facts from encounters with customs and laws of this hermitic kingdom, facts bottom-up: incarn[ation du] témoin", "[...] une connaissance de manière directe et empirique" and "l'expérience au déjà vu" and then unifying them top-down by a "démarche de compilation et de generalisation des différents

<sup>478</sup> Sade, *Aline et Valcour*, Tome II, op. cit., 23.

<sup>479</sup> The respective countries of origin of the two discoverers in question: Sainville and Sarmiento.

<sup>480</sup> Aurélia Hollart, '*L'Anthropologie Religieuse Dans Le Voyage de Sainville de Léonore*', *Sade en toutes lettres autour d'Aline et Valcour*, op. cit., 127.

faits observés par les voyageurs”.<sup>481</sup> Hollart shows Sarmiento’s “discours polémique plus large” and Sainville’s impassionate rebuttal - often punctuated with sentimentality drawing on the woe of longing for his kidnapped lover - to be more than just the case of a difference of opinion concerning a remote tribe in Africa. She demonstrates the limit spectators encounter when facing the world as coeval interpreters, i.e., the perennial failure to find that “elliptic point of alignment where objects inorganic, organic and conceptual alike stand at some nadir” (p. 26), and unlike the elliptic point that was at bottom for d’Alembert; this one comes atop those “grand systems purporting “positive” unity”. Hollart identifies this gap as neither symmetrical nor asymmetrical - but elliptic. He describes it this way: “contenant en critique des lacunes et des excès de l’étude de l’autre”.<sup>482</sup> The implication for the debate between these two European discoverers is (elliptic) fissures of three that render the problem of unity impossible: the two in debate and the local, the target of the inquiry:

La transcription de la découverte se double alors d’un propos explicative dépassant le cadre local. On peut dire que le jeu est d’une certaine façon faussé par la superposition de ces deux discours; le texte se trouve en quelque sorte piégé par l’imbrication du commentaire dans un témoignage prétendument neutre. Mais on peut se demander si la force d’une telle réunion n’est pas d’exposer la complémentarité du chacun des éléments.<sup>483</sup>

And Hollart inserts the question of atheism in this failure, asserting that the demonstration of the “relativity of morals” be Sade’s overriding concern. But does not atheism impugn on a “relativity of morals” too? In Chapter 1.2, St-Martin noted Sade’s non-position concerning theories of “ovisme”, “animalculisme” and “épigénèse” but isolated the latter to make the case for atheism: the “obsolescence sperm-ova “hérédité” obtruded upon the divinely created homunculi of preformationism” (p. 40). In a similar manner, Hollart sees Sade sealing off any possibility to get beyond the “positive” baseline, where two or more truth statements about the same world can carry their weight with equally “positivity”. As Klossowski has demonstrated, God was very much vital to Sade’s investigatory approach but only as far as he

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<sup>481</sup> Ibid, 128.

<sup>482</sup> Ibid, 132.

<sup>483</sup> Ibid,

was absent in a “positive” sense, which Klossowski does not adequately clarify in bringing Sade back to the Christian God in *Sade, Mon Prochain* (p. 40). It is better to call Sade’s plunge into atheism as a plunge into “negativity”. Sainville’s voyage to Butua is rife with such “negative” inquiries such that it is better to deal with the notion of a “relativity of morals” as that, which lies on the now familiar “negative”-“positive” scale. Noticing the “complémentarité du chacun des elements” in the debate between Sainville and Sarmiento that pinches out “le cadre local”, Hollart suggests that Butua in its inception was in fact the Old World.

In “The Marquis de Sade: First Zimbabwean Novelist” D.N. Beach calls Sade a “subtle racist” and observes that the ghastly things he wrote taking place in Butua were no worse than those happening in Europe in many of his other works.<sup>484</sup> Catching Sade red-handed in this apparent hypocritical moment ends up being a Pyrrhic victory for the author: Butua was in its inception meant to be Europe of the *Ancien Regime*. Sade could not have been more direct on this point than writing how the dangers of the school of libertinage in Europe, in Butua: “il en deviant une loi”.<sup>485</sup> In his description of the education system in Butua with its own “negative” design, Sade engages Rousseau and the hermitical home-school curriculum he established for the young Émile. The relation between the two was established earlier: “Rousseau having described “virtue” as fundamentally erotic it is now possible to see “vice” simply as its amplification. It is with “vice” that Sade fills the “plenum” of the world” (p. 72). Where Rousseau sought an enclave free of those now familiar “positive” forces of his contemporary society; and Diderot sought Tahiti outside the ship of

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<sup>484</sup> D.N. Beach, ‘The Marquis de Sade: The First Zimbabwean Novelist’, *Zambezia*, VIII (i), (Harare: Zimbabwe University Press, 1980), 53. \* ‘De Sade sets out to make the kingdom of Butua as revolting as possible, and it might easily be supposed that this was no more than a crude racist slur upon Africans. De Sade was rather more subtle than that. In the first place, the horrors of Butua, for which he hypocritically makes his narrator apologize in advance to the *salon* of Mme de Blamont, are certainly no worse than those of the societies of Europe described in some of his other works, and in fact de Sade’s view of the human race was so cynical that it would hardly have been likely that he would have regarded Africans as being any different.’ (Full quotation)

<sup>485</sup> Sade, *Aline et Valcour*, Tome II, op. cit., 25.

Bougainville, Sade by presenting Europe in the guise of the “Other” is denying shelter to those seeking utopias outside the Western orbit. This is much like Blake’s monistic move to universalize the Bastille and Fayette in his poetic forays into the New World. Sade plunges into negativity in Butua in much the same ways he does in *Les 120 Journées* but the top-down orientation creates different thematics of emphasis and de-emphasize. One plunge comes with the appearance of the king at a deeper rung of “negativity”, probably about the same level as mid-December in Champville’s narration of the 150 Complex Passions when paedophilia, incest and then blasphemy begin to merge. In the school system of Butua, the young are allotted roles and primed for participation in festivals following a religious calendric system much like those structuring *Les 120 Journées*. The staging of all participants anticipates the stations they are to have in adulthood like a rite of initiation of sorts:

La defloration se fait aux pieds de l’idole. Le chef commence, il est suivi du college entire. Les filles sont présentées deux fois, les garçon, une. Des sacrifices, suivent le cérémonie; à treize ou quatorze ans, les élèves retournent dans leurs familles; on leur demande s’ils ont été sanctifiés: s’ils ne l’avaient pas été, les garçons seraient horriblement méprisés, et les filles ne trouveraient aucun époux.<sup>486</sup>

The preeminent ceremony, one imbued with a deepest degree of “negativity” takes place in the capital city, the only difference “consiste dans le droit qu’a le monarque d’opérer”.<sup>487</sup>

Notably, the blasphemy that infused *Les 120 Journées* is necessarily absent in Butua; and replaced by the severest of punishment for insubordination to this God-king and his priests. Blasphemy only matters as passion come from bottom-up and *not* top-down. In an even deeper plunge into “corruption”, one raising that enduring motif of “sterility” seen worked in Diderot and Blake’s pneumatological musings, Sade broaches an issue, which had been outside the parameters of concern in Silling Château: human extinction. Sainville cannot contain his shock during Sarmiento’s description of some of the other forms of ritual:

[J]e ne tiens pas [...] a voir la pédérastie érigée en initiation; à quel point de corruption doit être parvenu un peuple [...] le plus destructeur de l’humanité, le plus contraire aux lois de la nature, et le plus dégoûtant de la terre.<sup>488</sup>

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<sup>486</sup> Ibid.

<sup>487</sup> Ibid.

<sup>488</sup> Ibid

At several other points in Sarmiento's tour other examples of customs that inhibit fecundity are mentioned like those given in Beach's translation, which include incessant stress by abuse and overwork limiting chances of pregnancy and lengthy edicts delaying coitus after female menstruation (eight days before; eight days after) and childbirth (three years later).<sup>489</sup> Though plenty of sodomy took place amongst the "four heroes" and the members of their seraglio it was never framed as homosexuality as such; the notion can only ever be relevant from a "top-down" concern that prioritizes reproduction of the species. Another example of a passion very special to Butua is cannibalism saliently understated in *Les 120 Journées* as such a passion too becomes relevant only from a bird's eye view of humanity. From this vantage point those frenzied dismemberments of objects of desire in the ambit of Desgranges' narration of the 150 Murderous Passions find what could have only been their ulterior meaning: extinction of the individual and species and a stab at what comes beyond:

[Sarmiento justifies:] Ne comprends pas dans la corruption morale l'usage de manger de la chair humaine. Il est aussi simple de se nourrir d'un homme que d'un boeuf. Dis si tu veux que la guerre, cause de la destruction de l'espèce, est un fléau; mais cette destruction faite, il est absolument égale que ce soient les entrailles de la terre ou celles de l'homme qui servent de sépulcre à des éléments désorganisés.<sup>490</sup>

On the latter point of "sépulcre à des éléments désorganisés" Sade meets up with the proposition d'Holbach introduces in his *Le système de la nature, Vol. 1* where the changing of matter is the only law of nature: "[...] Nature contains no one constant form, yet thou pretendest thy species can never disappear [...]."<sup>491</sup> In the corrupt system of Butua the libertine king, the depopulator of his people; derelict steward for future generations has the

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<sup>489</sup> D.N. Beach, op. cit., 56. \* 'Women do all the work in the fields and houses under the whips of their husbands and are the butts of every evil whim of the men. These customs, two in particular, restrict the population almost to destruction. One is the belief that a woman is impure for eight days before and eight days after her period, leaving only eight in which she is fit to serve man; the other is that a woman is not touched by her husband for three years after each birth; in addition, from the moment a woman becomes pregnant, she is exposed to the contempt of everyone and denied access to the temples, and she does not dare to appear in public. Sarmiento feels that these practices might have been sensible in a period of over-population, but that they are ridiculous in Butua's present circumstances; as it is, the nation will be extinct in a century'. (Full quotation)

<sup>490</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>491</sup> Baron d'Holbach, *System of Nature, Vol. 1*, op. cit., 49. \* 'O man! Wilt thou never conceive, that thou art but an ephemeron? All changes in the great macrocosm: nothing remains the same an instant, in the planet thou inhabitest: Nature contains no one constant form, yet thou pretendest thy species can never disappear; that thou shalt be exempt from the universal law, that wills all shall experience change.' (Full quotation)

sterile quality of Blake's characterization of Urizen, the difference being in Blake's description "positivity" underlies his anatomy, whose builders have already been introduced as Newton and Hume. Sade's characterization is "negative" but the target is the same: France under the Ancien Regime with the same monist extension as Blake's Bastille. The Kingdom of Butua was only ever meant to be the negative form of that other government deserving of installation amongst free people. It was Tamoé, the island kingdom in the South Pacific, ruled by the benevolent king, Zamé that was the model government for the French Revolution.

Although it is easy to see the island of Tamoé belonging to the same climatic zone as Diderot's Tahiti, seeing Les Charmettes and Birmingham as also belonging is much less obvious. The pneumatological presentations of both Rousseau and Bentham have much in common with Sade and his Tamoé. Here Zamé describes a climate to which the reader is by now surely well-adjusted:

Tu vois la temperature de ce climat [...] well est salubre, douce, égale; le vegetation est forte, abondante et l'air presque toujours pur: ce que nous appelons nos hivers, consiste en quelques pluies, qui tombe dans les mois de juillet et d'août, mais qui ne rafraîchissent jamais l'air au point de nous obliger d'augmenter nos vêtements, aussi les rhumes sont-ils absolument inconnus parmi nous: la nature n'y afflige nos habitants que de très peu de maladies; la multitude d'année est le plus grand mal don't elle les accable, c'est Presque la seule manière dont elle les tue.<sup>492</sup>

The temperature and weather conditions never change so much as to cause anything but clothing of the same material "fine et moelleuse" to be worn, whose raw materials are as constant as the fabrics readily available to make them on the island:

[...] ces l'étoffes et celles de leurs voiles sont tissues, dans leur propres manufactures de la troisième peau d'un arbre [...].<sup>493</sup>

It takes but a brief reminder of how Wolmar managed Clarnes estate according to a like principle of self-reliance and thriftiness to see the link. Just as Zamé "ne perm[it pas] l'exportation du superflu [...]"<sup>494</sup> including goods of European origin, ever present on the island's boundaries (with incidental visits from the likes of Cook and Sainville) threatening

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<sup>492</sup> Sade, 'Aline et Valcour', op. cit., 687.

<sup>493</sup> Ibid, 620.

<sup>494</sup> Ibid, 640.

changing consumption habits of the locals into something “positively” malignant, Wolmar did much the same in his promotion of Clarnes as a micro-economy where native resources were consumed in moderation and the local brands (of trout, dress and furniture) were not “despised” in view of fashionable and popular continental ones (p. 52). In fact, Sade is giving here a pneumatological interpretation to what Wolmar otherwise speaks of in plain language:

Voilà, mon cher, continuait le sage Wolmar, comment avec de l'économie et des soins on peut se mettre au-dessus de sa fortune. Il ne tiendrait qu'à nous *d'augment* la nôtre sans changer notre manière de vivre; car il ne se fait ici presque aucune avance qui n'ait un produit pour objet, et tout ce que nous dépensons nous rend de quoi dépense beaucoup plus.<sup>495</sup>

Zamé even goes beyond the diet Wolmar sets up for Julie, that one of unseasoned meats attained only from local stocks; Zamé presents a vegetarian diet limited to “de legumes, de confitures, de fruits et de pâtisserie”,<sup>496</sup> which stands in direct contradistinction to the cannibalism of Butua. Sarmiento linked this anthropophagic practice to glory on the battlefield and saw no difference between consuming human flesh his way and killing a cow for food: “Il est aussi simple de se nourrir d'un homme que d'un boeuf”.<sup>497</sup> Zamé reverses Sarmiento's contention, stating that:

[...] c'est qu'il nourrit son orgueil beaucoup plus que son estomac [...] il imagine qu'il y a la grandeur [...] à faire assumer vingt bêtes pour en substantier une<sup>498</sup>

and makes this not only a health issue:

[...] qu'il soit bon d'engloutir dans ses entrailles la chair et le sang putréfiés de mille animaux divers; il ne peut résulter de-là qu'un chile âcre, qui détériore nécessairement nos organes, qui les affaiblit, qui précipite les infirmités et hate la mort<sup>499</sup>

but a moral one as well: “[...] pourquoi sacrifier nos frères quand la nature donne autre chose?”<sup>500</sup> In linking meat to both the corruption of pride and putrefaction of the body Sade is drawing a clear alignment between two facets of pneumatological concern emerging from a cesspool. This link with Rousseau is really anticipated in Tome 1 of the book when Sade

<sup>495</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *La nouvelle Héloïse* (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1967), 416. (Emphasis added)

<sup>496</sup> Sade, *Aline et Valcour*, Tome II, op. cit., 37.

<sup>497</sup> Ibid.

<sup>498</sup> Ibid.

<sup>499</sup> Ibid, 38.

<sup>500</sup> Ibid, 37.

presents Valcour in the guise of himself in his own autobiography. Although the veracity of the claim to have actually met Rousseau is lost in the blurred line between fact and fiction such a literary style straddles, Valcour, having had an audience with Rousseau and receiving from him both compliments and encouragement for his literary aspirations, verifies the metaphysical link that would appear later in the kingdom of Tamoé. Even in Valcour's description of the "système odieux" (Butua) that would contradict the virtue of Tamoé, the issue of "choking air" introduced earlier by Darwin returns, confirms a pneumatological link:

Rousseau vivait, je fus le voir; il avait connu ma famille; il me recut avec cette aménité, cette honnêteté franche, compagnes inseparables du génies et des talents supérieurs; il loua, il encouragea le projet qu'il me vit former de renoncer à tout pour me livrer totalement à l'étude des lettres et de la philosophie, il y guida mes jeunes ans, et m'apprit à séparer la véritable vertu des systèmes odieux sous lesquels on l'étouffe....<sup>501</sup>

Of course, Sade is known to have been a much more competent voyager of the realm of vice than that one of virtue; however, given that both belong to that same immaterial space of the plenum any difference in argumentation shrinks to the point of verging on alignment. The same can be said of voyagers like Bentham the substance of whose argument is not too far below the surface in Tamoé.

Madame de Sade was clearly uncomfortable with Sade's fondness for the British at several points in *Aline et Valcour*, even suggesting it could "arouse resentment",<sup>502</sup> a euphemism for possible accusations of treason. She advised Sade to

[...] bring about a panegyric of the French King, well situated without insipidity, and a reminiscence of his French origin which compensate and justify the panegyric of the British.<sup>503</sup>

Here are a couple of examples of what Madame de Sade would have meant by this fondness. At one point in the narrative the Englishman, Captain Cook, acts as a *deus ex machina*, arriving in the nick of time to rescue Sainville from his captivity in Butua (now understood as the embodiment of the Ancien Regime) and helping him on his way to find his beloved Léonore. On a deeper level, the English also end up as an important countervailing force to

<sup>501</sup> Sade, 'Aline et Valcour', op. cit., 412 (Emphasis added).

<sup>502</sup> Renée Pélégie Cordier de Montreuil, Marquise de Sade, 'Observation on Aline and Valcour', op. cit., 39

<sup>503</sup> Ibid.



those corrupt ones in Sade's pneumatology, for example, Sainville presents English utility as undermining that "ancienne industrie entierement de l'or"<sup>504</sup> - gold here being the key pneumatological reference to money as holder of alchemical value<sup>505</sup> under the aegis of the Catholic Church. He lectures Sarmiento on this point:

Il n'y avait pas jusqu'à vos crucifix, vos reliquaries vos chapelets, ciboires, tous ces instruments idolâtres don't la superstition degrade le culte pur de l'Éternel, que vous ne fissiez fair aux Anglais; ils surent enfin vous subjuguier au point de se charger de votre navigation de l'ancien monde, de vos vendre des vaisseaux et des munitions [...] ils vous ravirent jusqu'à votre propre commerce intérieur: on ne voyait plus que des magasin anglais à Lisbonne, et cela sans que vous y fissiez le plus léger profit.<sup>506</sup>

Utility as the driving force for successful economic policy in England would have been visible to Sade from his side of the English Channel; and mentioning it brings again to the fore those members of the Lunar Society of Birmingham, who contributed to the formulation of this policy. Priestley and Bentham have been mentioned on this account but let another member be summoned: Matthew Boulton. The importance of his contribution to fiduciary policy at the time had both economic and pneumatological implications, the latter not surprising given the influence coming from his close ties with the Lunar Society of Birmingham.

One way to understand Sainville's attack on the gold of the Catholic Church is to frame the issue within a contemporaneous debate that considered how monetary value was distributed in a society; how currency was circulated amongst its members. One problematic issue that related to monetary policy of the time was the unwanted and exploitable effects that came whenever the production of coinage was aimed at standardization. Gresham's Law stated that "bad coins drive out good coins" and this was the case whenever coins were recognized as having lower material values than their stated face-value. This could happen,

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<sup>504</sup> Sade, *Aline et Valcour*, Tome II, op. cit., 19.

<sup>505</sup> Carl Wennerlind described how early economists, in seeking proper quantifies of ingredients and applications of heat, sought to 'speed up base metals' ripening into gold within the surrogate womb of nature, the furnace' (Carl Wennerlind, 'Credit-Money as the Philosopher's Stone: Alchemy and the Coinage Problem in Seventeenth-Century England', *History of Political Economy Annual Supplement to Volume 35* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 240). This was all keeping with the belief that the alchemical conversion of base metals to gold was a metonym for the Eucharist: base humankind converted into purity through enactment of this divine ritual.

<sup>506</sup> Ibid.

for example, to silver coins if parity with gold became too disparate and they flowed out of circulation to places where they are dearer. Gold coins when not properly standardized, for example, correct weighted ones could be siphoned, or “culled out” of circulation where profits were higher. These processes had broad economic implication as value either concentrated in certain areas; or dispersed out of others. If the value of coinage was imbued with the inherent value of sovereigns then this demanded a proactive monetary policy, designed to prevent one from being on the losing side of this fiduciary osmosis. In “Sovereign Counterfeits: the Trial of the Pyx”, Simon Wotham described one case where a sovereign played the culler of his own monies in an attempt to head off any drain from his coffers. After his 1611 Trial of the Pyx, that periodic test measuring degrees of standardization amongst extant royal coinage, James I issued an edict declaring money to be a “[...] disruptor of stable concepts of value, this culling out [being] literal proof that money was by nature amorphous, fluid and shifting”.<sup>507</sup> Coins, especially gold ones, given their pneumatological meaning, were meant to share a metonymic link with the body of the sovereign, any depreciation in the coin’s value, posing a clear threat to the intrinsic value of the sovereign him- or herself. James I becoming the “culler” of his own money had a series of unexpected consequences: a) if the move towards monometallism enhanced the value of gold - and as a consequence the sovereign’s own value - it would have been easy for subjects to forget this value when this mark of wealth was no longer a primary means of exchange in the marketplace but rather a collector’s item in the sovereign’s own treasury; b) if the sovereign sought to imbue his or her body in any and all coins in as transparent a manner as possible, this opened him or her up to a surfeit of different manipulations. Attestation of this latter consequence is revealed in a 1716 policy proposal signed by an anonymous B., who

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<sup>507</sup> Simon Wortham, ‘Sovereign Counterfeits: the Trial of the Pyx’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 49, No. 2, (July) (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996), 343.

warned those in authority about the epidemic of unscrupulous smiths profiting from the king's silver coins:

[...] if he wants to make our Money fit to work up into large Plate (that must be markt,) which will now pay him well for the refining it, He knows how to do that much easier than he can old Plate, that has Sodder in it; However, the Goldsmith can manage it more to his Advantage, save both Time and Fire, and make it answer his Purpose as well as if refin'd it, viz.<sup>508</sup>

Here the nature of coins' materiality and distribution lent itself easily to applications in other one-to-one relationships beyond what was intended. The consequences a) and b) converge in a more intensified way in John Powell's account of the history of the Birmingham coiners. In "The Birmingham coiners, 1770-1816" Powell tells of how these coiners kept money in general circulation through counterfeiting, avoiding punishment by simply making one feature different on the reproduced form of the original: changing Georgius III to George Gordon on the counterfeit coin would have sufficed<sup>509</sup> to avoid the accusation of counterfeiting while preserving the utility of the coin and making them available to a greater number of people. And with the invention of the die hubbing steam coin press by the commercial coiner, Matthew Boulton, this trend towards distributed utility would accelerate introducing an entirely new set of conditions once this coin press was in the hands of the state. It could not only flood the market with coins, depressing the need to counterfeit but also produce a more consistent and comprehensive imprint,<sup>510</sup> ensuring the intrinsicness of the monarch be compounded in all transparency in the marketplace, for the utility of all who gain possession, without reference to the extrinsicness that would have otherwise circled back to the king ("negativity" of relations). In Sainville's praise of English commercialism and

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<sup>508</sup> B., Further reasons, most humbly offer'd, for increasing our money; putting an immediate stop to it's being melted down, and sent abroad; for paying off our publick debts; encouraging trade; employing the poor, &c. London, 1716, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale Group, 2003, 3.

<sup>509</sup> John Powell, 'The Birmingham coiners, 1770-1816', *History Today* 43, July 1993, 50.

<sup>510</sup> George Selgin, 'Steam, hot air, and small change: Matthew Boulton and the reform of Britain's coinage', *Economic History Review*, LVI, 3 (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003), 494. \* '[...] how the availability of crucible steel allowed for greater uniformity by keeping individual die going longer and thereby producing up to hundreds of precisely identical working dies without cracking and without for further resort to hand engraving to correct flaws due to die-metal impurities.' (Full quotation)

denigration of the Portuguese gold mines, Sade universalizes utility as the death knell of all tyranny upheld by the pneumatology of gold, the Catholic Church being an originary source of the corruption. The pneumatology of Boulton's coins can be likened to those of Tamoé's climate, which too was "salubre, douce, égale" (p. 191).

The problems Boulton's coins pose for monarchs share filiation with that egg analogy introduced earlier in Chapter 1.3 by Montaigne in his reflection on "unlikeness" in laws passed by legislators: "Likeness does not make things 'one' as much as unlikeness makes them 'other' [...] Nature has bound herself to make nothing 'other' which is not unlike" (p. 39). Eggs seen as individuated in Montaigne's account of that famously perceptive man from Delphi are the counterfeiter's coins, against which the full force of the king's resentment is directed. Bentham has already attributed resentment, or antipathy, to tyrannical governments in need of reform (p. 155). Laws - not coins - occupy his attention although both can be seen falling out of Montaigne's same concern for unlikeness, which would have had pneumatological meaning for Montaigne, a Renaissance philosopher. Zamé gives his own egg analogy in his discussion with Sainville on the topic of crime and punishment and the parallels with Bentham's formulation are telling:

Supposons un œuf place sur un billard et deux billes lances par un aveugle: l'un dans sa course évite l'œuf, l'autre le casse; est-ce la faute de la bille, est-ce la faute de l'aveugle qui a lancé la bille destructive, de l'œuf? L'aveugle est la nature, l'homme est la bille, l'œuf cassé le crime commis. Regarde à présent, mon amis, de quelle équité sont les lois de ton Europe et quelle attention doit avoir législateur qui prétendra les reformer.<sup>511</sup>

Zamé goes on to explain how reforms ought to be aimed at modifying billard balls not nature itself as:

[...] il n'y a rien de nous, rien à nous, tous est la nature, et nous ne sommes jamais dans ses mains que l'aveugle instrument de des caprice.<sup>512</sup>

Laws are thus occasioned by the very state of nature and Zamé sees its corruption coming out its other end: in punishment. It is here where his reforms intervene on what would otherwise be the consequence of law:

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<sup>511</sup> Sade, 'Aline et Valcour', op. cit., 677. (Emphasis added)

<sup>512</sup> Ibid.

[r]endez-les meilleur en les contraignant d'être utiles [...] mais ne les jetez pas inhumainement dans ces cloaques *empestées*, où tout ce qui les entoure est si *gangrené*, qu'il deviant incertain de savoir lequel achèvera de les *corrompre* plus vite [...].<sup>513</sup>

Zamé dresses his protestation of incarceration with like pneumatological terminology to Bentham. This is really Zamé's version of the "silken threads" discussed earlier in Bentham's juxtaposition of "laws of terror, spirits and fictions" and those "of utility, bodies and material interest" and Zamé's remedial treatment for wrongdoers:

[...] faites-la-lui réparer en le rendant utile à la société [...] qu'il dédommage cette société du tort [...] mais ne l'isolez pas, ne le séquestrez pas"<sup>514</sup>

bears resemblance to how Bentham in his panopticon aims to bring the criminal into the light of full transparency and modify him by inculcating desired behavior. Zamé, however, outdoes Bentham in extending "utility" beyond simply the confines of religious reform, which he advocated as a rational dissenter. Bentham was keenly aware of the impact utility had on the pneumatology of religion. Here is how Bentham saw the workings of utility on even the most "ill-constituted government":

[...] men's moral sensibility is commonly stronger, and their moral biases more conformable to the dictates of utility: their religious sensibility frequently weaker, but their religious biases less unconformable to the dictates of utility: their sympathetic affections more enlarged, directed to the magistrate more than to small parties or to individuals, and the more to the whole community than to either: their antipathetic sensibilities less violent, as being more obsequious to the influences of well-directed moral biases, and less apt to be excited by that of ill-directed religious ones [...].<sup>515</sup>

Sade, however, presents Zamé as the antithesis of the king of Butua, whose own minimal interest in laws was purposely designed to propagate passions and in so doing create new forms of crime. Zamé had his own reason for promoting a policy of minimalizing laws:

[...] il faut des dépositaires aux lois [...] si les lois sont justes, boneset en petit nombre, elle n'ont pas besoin d'être depose ailleurs que dans le cœur de chaque citoyen et ells s'y placeront naturellement.<sup>516</sup>

And this reason falls outside this negative apparatus embodied in the figure of Butua's God-King. Atheism was the pneumatological alternative. In a statement very similar to the one Bentham gives, Zamé argues that it is the very nature of religion to produce laws:

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<sup>513</sup> Ibid, 678

<sup>514</sup> Ibid, 659.

<sup>515</sup> Jeremy Bentham, 'Introduction', op. cit., 107.

<sup>516</sup> Sade, 'Aline et Valcour', op. cit., 630.

[...] bien éloigné de calquer mes lois sur les maxims erronnées de la plupart des religions recues, bein éloigné d'ériger en crimes les faiblesses de l'homme, si ridiculement menaces par les cultes barbares [...].<sup>517</sup>

By this same token, and fitting the atheistic project that would have been at the time of editing *Aline et Valcour* the pulse of the French Revolution, he presents atheism as the corrective pneumatological measure:

[...] j'ai cru que s'il existait réellement un Dieu, il était impossible qu'il punît ses creatures des défauts place par sa main meme; que pour composer un code raisonnable, je devais me régler sur sa justice et sur sa tolerance; que l'athéisme le plus decide devenait mille fois preferable à admission d'un Dieu, don't le culte s'opposerait au bonheur de l'humanité [...].<sup>518</sup>

The very existence of God is accepted by Sade never to have been even a choice for humankind to make as it was believed its very aspect infused the entirety of the world. Furthermore, part of the logic in the reforms Zamé sought was to sever complete ties with the "laws of terror, spirits and fictions" of Bentham's characterization. Zamé is also offering a draw bridge out of the domain of Silling Château. To appropriate Bentham's own words:

[for Sade atheism was] the sole standard, in conformity to which each individual ought, as far as depends upon the legislator, to be made to fashion his behavior.<sup>519</sup>

And this fashioning started from the earliest of ages on the island of Tamoé.

The implementation of reform began in the education system Zamé established for the youth of Tamoé, which Sade sets up in contrast to that system already seen in Butua. Separated by gender but given the same education (except girls are not taught physical education), youths were educated in the same manner Rousseau educated Émile according to his pedagogic progressivist approach but within a nationalized system:

[...] vous n'en voyez à l'éducation des enfants, me [Sainville] dit Zamé, cultivez leur gout et leurs inclination, ne leur apprenez surtout que ce est nécessaire [comme agriculture].<sup>520</sup>

As it was the case in Diderot's Otaïti, preparation for marriage is one of the culminating steps in the education of Tamoé but with two added reforms. One was the right to divorce with provisions established ensuring harmony for all members affected in the aftermath, for

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<sup>517</sup> Ibid, 676.

<sup>518</sup> Ibid.

<sup>519</sup> Jeremy Bentham, op. cit., 33. (Modified)

<sup>520</sup> Ibid, 692.

example, children from a previous marriage had to move out of paternal home and become wards of the state as: “les pères aimeront mieux les derniers enfants”.<sup>521</sup> The right to divorce was also one of the celebrated liberties in the new French revolutionary society. The other reform departs from the harsh treatment sterile members received in Diderot’s account of Otaïti. Zamé takes special care to ensure the old, the sick, the widowed and those who choose singlehood by their own volition are taken care of and have roles to play in society. Zamé reflects on sterility and teaches Sainville the law of the land:

Il exista dans tous les siècles et dans tout les pays, une classe d’homme qui, peu propre aux douceurs de l’hymen, et redoutant ses nœuds par des raisons ou morales ou physiques, préférèrent de vivre seuls, aux délices, d’avoir une compagne [...] Tamoé, moins fameuse que la république qui subjuguait l’univers, a pourtant des célibataires comme elle, mais nous n’avons point fait de lois contre eux. On obtient aisément ici la permission de ne point se marier, à condition de servir la patrie dans toutes les corvées publiques.<sup>522</sup>

With legislation on divorce and rules, governing the status of being sterile by circumstance or choice, Sade is moving past a metaphysics of proximal concern for what is “generation”-only - a “positive” concern for progeny. This is comparable to say Rousseau’s metaphysics of child abandonment (and interestingly, Rousseau’s children became wards of the state just as the children from “broken homes” on the island of Tamoé would become). In this way something far more distal, and thus more “negative” is opened up for consideration. However, one part of Zamé’s education program would seem to contradict his pneumatology of atheism; and this is the special place for God in education for twelve and fourteen year old boys and girls:

[...] seulement alors on leur apprenait les devoirs de l’homme en société, et ses rapports avec les êtres dont il tient le jour, on leur parlait de Dieu, on leur inspirait de l’amour et de la reconnaissance pour ces êtres qui les avaient créés.<sup>523</sup>

Raising this question here aims to deal with the “distal” metaphysics just mentioned, that one pushing beyond mere concern for generation. Worship in Tamoé had a pneumatological

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<sup>521</sup> Ibid, 649.

<sup>522</sup> Ibid, 693.

<sup>523</sup> Ibid, 690.

focus matching the weather conditions on the island opening Sainville's arrival, i.e., sunny weather:

[...] les habitants de Tamoé adoraient le Soleil autrefois, [Sainville] n'[a] fait que rectifier leur système, en leur prouvant qu'ils se trompaient de l'ouvrage à l'ouvrier, que le Soleil était la chose mue, et que c'était au moteur que devait s'adresser le culte.<sup>524</sup>

It only takes d'Holbach's reflection on pagan religions to situate Tamoé within the domain of those who "adore[] active nature and of the great whole considered relatively to its different operations and qualities".<sup>525</sup> In Chapter 1.2 Sade was placed in an antecedent position to that famous boundary d'Holbach drew up between polytheism and monotheism once those "leisurely" metaphysicians and theologians [...] 'subtilly' partition[ed] off 'nature from herself' and from nature's 'energy' creating an 'incomprehensible being'. The proximal concern for tribal generation above all else, i.e., Diderot's Otaïti, raises the specter of this "incomprehensible being" as the idea of the tribe overwhelms all else that nature could contain including what was sterile and thus *not of the Otaïti*. Although in Blake's formulation generation too was privileged, in the Plate 91 of *Jerusalem* he seems to add a warning to those, who give proximal answers to concerns for what is either "congenial to man's happiness" or "inimical to his welfare", these questions, relics of the first transition into monotheism as per d'Holbach. Blake (through Los) states:

Terrified Los sat to behold, trembling & weeping & howling. / I care not whether a Man is Good or Evil; all that I care/ Is whether he is a Wise Man or a Fool. Go, put off Holiness/ And put on Intellect: or my thund'rous Hammer shall drive thee/ To wrath which thou condemnest: till thou obey my voice.<sup>526</sup>

In David Whitmarsh-Knight's line-by-line interpretation of Blake's work, he would even add to Los' "wrath list": "pseudo sacrifices of the fertility worship and natural religion and morality"<sup>527</sup> and this fits nicely with what has been presented in this section as Sade working

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<sup>524</sup> Ibid, 685.

<sup>525</sup> Baron d'Holbach, op. cit., 27.

<sup>526</sup> William Blake, *The Prophetic Books of William Blake: Jerusalem* (London: A.H. Bullen, 1904), 114.

<sup>527</sup> David Whitmarsh-Knight, 'William Blake's "Jerusalem" Explained: the first full-scale line by line analysis' (Cambridge: William Blake Press, 2009), 542. \* [...] Los is committed to intellectual encounter in the wars of life: "I care not" he says "whether a Man is Good or Evil" for these qualities are dependent on a moral law, "all that I care/ Is whether he is a Wise Man or a Fool. Go! Put off Holiness/ And put on Intellect". All the forms of pseudo-religions, pseudo morality and the pseudo sacrifices of fertility worship and natural religion and morality



against all “grand systems” purporting “positive” unity religious, political, cultural or otherwise. Although a much more extensive metaphysics is instituted in Tamoé beyond the proximal concern for generation seen in Diderot’s Otaïti and Madame de Sade’s criticism of non-reproductive sex, Zamé is still stomping for one grand system purporting “positive” unity, a system for Tamoé only. Richard Robert in “Les Impasses De L’Écriture Politique” recognizes this contradiction in considering the kingdoms of Butua and Tamoé side by side, articulating the problem he sees this way:

La façon dont Sade mine ainsi soigneusement le modèle de Tamoé finit par convaincre le lecteur attentive que les deux royaumes, plutôt que de fonctionner comme un exemple et un contre-exemple, sont renvoyés dos à dos. Certes Tamoé ressemble davantage à une proposition, mais sur le fond elle est menacée d’un échec moins spectaculaire, mais tout aussi patent que celui de Butua. Entre le survoltage et le sous-voltage, entre les intrusions abusives du bien et celles du mal, les deux royaumes se répondent comme deux faces de la question posée par nature à la politique.<sup>528</sup>

He would go on to offer “une troisième voie”, which he argued was found not long after Sainville left Tamoé; when he happened upon a group of gypsy-bandits, which Robert argues are “la micro-société [...] qui constituerait donc une échappée hors du système dialogique Butua/ Tamoé”.<sup>529</sup> Such a deployment would allow Tamoé to remain the allegory for the new revolutionary society; Butua, the repudiation of the former *Ancien Régime*; and Sade to preserve his now familiar methodology of non-commitment, or better, his pneumatology of atheism. Le Brun has already suggested such a description in her notion of “vitalist atheism”: “[... only Sade] could preserve us from the deception of a thought originally designed for unmasking, but which had subsequently turned in an ideology of remasking” (p. 40-41). In lieu of Sade’s pneumatological play with apparent contradictions, one faulty yet pervasive manner of reading them needs to be confronted as it contributes to a frequently held misconception concerning the history of the period. The emergence of a new negativity far

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are subject of his prophetic authority. His “thunderous Hammer shall drive” the dependent forms of “Holiness” to reveal the hypocrisy and concentrate “wrath which” they “condemnest”. Los commits himself to the destruction of the forms of quasi-holiness “till” they “obey” his prophetic “voice”.’ (Full quotation)

<sup>528</sup> Richard Robert, ‘Les Impasses de l’Écriture Politique’, *Sade en toutes lettres autour d’Aline et Valcour*, op. cit., 165.

<sup>529</sup> Ibid, 167.

different than any one discussed so far is anticipated albeit prematurely in Peter Fowler's "When Opposites Attract: Moral Polarity in Sade's *Aline and Valcour*". This new negativity falls in line with the progression seen developing throughout this dissertation from posteriority, anteriority and finally interiority, the accumulative effect of all residing at the most recent end. However, discussion of interiority is really only appropriate at the correct historical juncture and this needs clarification. Faulty readings like Fowler's also has had the effect of skewing the meaning of important terminologies related to the period, including ones like *sensibilité*. One misconception in reading *Aline et Valcour* will lead off the exploration of the third and final mode of discovery completing the journey started by Sade in *Les 120 Journées*.

## Chapter 5

*La philosophie dans le boudoir***5.1 Before there was Hegel: the Emergence of a New Kind of “Negativity”**

Before a metaphysics of success can be formulated, it is necessary to explain why it is that until now an *explanans* for success has been mostly unavailable. Much has been made of the importance of “negativity” to cover the fullness of the *explanandum* being sought in the pursuit of this success. “Positivity” has been developed as having a scope far too narrow to be of any use in this regard. This chapter will present that important metaphysical construct that although claiming “negativity” only masquerades as such and ends up inundated with “positivity” through and through. Dialecticism would be epistemologically foundational to formations of both statements and the sources of these statements going forward well into the nineteenth century and (modern) beyond. Dialecticism was first articulated by Hegel, who mediated his own experience with the fruits of the French Revolution through this theoretical framework. This chapter will contrast Sade and Hegel’s responses to the French Revolution, responses that happen to be both as equally theoretical but built out of very different conceptions of “negativity”.

What would the kingdoms of Butua and Tamoé look like if both their pneumatological atmospheres were to be emptied out by some de-pneumatologizing vacuum? Fowler offers a glimpse in his presentation of Président de Blamont and Aline as two polarities, these two characters of course being for Sade those entry points into Sainville’s pneumatological exploration of the two kingdoms in Letter XXXV. From the outset, Fowler does not believe Sade when he asserts in his “Avis de l’Éditeur” that for all the characters to take the stage in the narrative “[...] de bien forts, cela n’a jamais été que pour faire voir avec quel ascendant” (p. 191). Fowler sees instead a novel “[...] with no competing voices”<sup>530</sup> at

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<sup>530</sup> Peter Fowler, ‘When Opposites Attract: Moral Polarity in Sade’s *Aline et Valcour*’, *Neophilologus* 95 (London: Springer Science+Business Media B.V., 2010), 52.

all but one with two clearly partitioned camps, which, citing Jean M. Goulemot, he puts into a “distribution des deux univers romanesques” with the two realms being “*trop de vertu de côté de Vertfeuille et trop de vice chez les libertins*”.<sup>531</sup> This choice of “trop de” has a particular resonance given its filiation with another “trop de” famously used by Sartre to define “being-in-itself” against its “being-for-itself” counterpart, the latter, the only one of the two endowed with the attribute of “possibility”:

*Being-in-itself* is never either possible or impossible. It is. This is what consciousness expresses in anthropomorphic terms by saying that being is *superfluous* (*de trop*) --- that is, that consciousness absolutely can not derive being from anything, either from another being, or from a possibility, or from a necessary law. **Uncreated, without reason for being, without any connection with another being, being-in-itself is de trop for eternity.**<sup>532</sup>

Hollart presented earlier a much different formal structure to account for what appeared as moral polarities, those ones she saw at play in Sainville and Sarmiento’s competing visions concerning the kingdom of Butua. And Robert’s “troisième voie” of seeing the “micro-société” of the Brigandos upend these complementary kingdoms of Butua and Tamoé is another example. Unlike the “de trop” structure, Hollart’s conceptualisation satisfies the conditions for “negativity” presented in this dissertation: “Hollart identifies this gap, neither symmetrical nor asymmetrical - but elliptic - this way: “contenant en critique des lacunes et des excès de l’étude de l’autre”” (p. 193). In Sartre’s characterization, “de trop” is conspicuously devoid of the relations integral to how “negativity” has been laid out up until this point. What’s more, Sartre’s presentation seems to resemble that familiar “positive” articulation first seen in Rousseau’s narration of Grimm’s bout with lovesickness. “Uncreated”, “without connection with any other being” and, better yet, “superfluous”, this figure is Smith’s *homo economicus* of the fashion world; the embodiment of those materialists of desire Hunt and Schiebinger discussed. All the above comprise a metaphysical trope lying in wait to be generalized amidst the tumult of the French Revolution and made the

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<sup>531</sup> Ibid. (Emphasis added)

<sup>532</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, op. cit., 29. (Emphasis added)

model, by which all would engage anew with objects in the world. Even as early as 1721 when Montesquieu in his *Persian Letters* had a Persian interlocutor named Risa write to his fellow co-traveller, Usbek, on what peculiarities he heard while eavesdropping on a pair of sycophantic schemers from Paris, the structure of “interiority” had already been given “life and death” importance. It was as if the failure to charm was of the same metaphysical consequence as failing to acquire “objects” (food) for biological needs in the “anteriority” phase:

Yesterday I had hoped to shine with three and four old women who certainly did not overawe me, and I had some absolutely beautiful things to say. I spent more than a quarter of an hour working around to them, but they would never keep to the point. Like *the three Greek fates they cut the thread* of everything I said. If you ask my opinion, it needs a lot of effort to keep up a reputation for being witty.<sup>533</sup>

In his model of conflictual symbiosis, Fowler sees libertines needing the virtuous to be the target of their denigration in order to enact their sought after defeat of Christianity, while the virtuous need the libertines to bring about suffering and the concomitant sensible display in need of an audience to behold.<sup>534</sup> Like that sycophantic schemer and those old women, whose manner of engagement did not afford him the opportunity to enact his “life or death” articulation, Madame de Blamant, in Fowler’s view, treads on a similar ground where authentic relations need not even be present. Observing her virtue in action, Fowler sees this same concern for others ultimately referring back to the beginning of her own articulation. If Madame de Blamant’s suffering, as Fowler interprets, is destined for an audience, whose communion ends up as an “orgy of sentiment”: “il y a des larmes si douce dans nos situation”, she can just as easily contradict these “relations” by referring back to the beginning of her own articulation set before a sympathetic audience she imagines:

[...] ces instants délicieux, où l’on fuit l’univers, où l’on s’enfonce dans un antre univers obscure ou sans le plus épais d’un bois pour y pleurer tout à son aise.<sup>535</sup>

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<sup>533</sup> Charles-Louis de Secondat Baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu, *Persian Letters* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 116. (Emphasis added)

<sup>534</sup> Peter Fowler, op. cit., 54.

<sup>535</sup> Ibid, 59.

What is here present is another example of what Smith introduced earlier as that “economy of sympathy”, the example given: the self-satisfied Stedman showcasing his *sensibilité* before suffering and dying slaves (p. 171) and even claiming the pain he felt before the violent spectacle be greater than the victim’s his or herself:

From different Parents, different Climes we came/ At different Periods; Fate still rules the same/ Unhappy Youth while bleeding on the ground/ ‘Twas Yours to fall\_\_ but Mine to feel the wound.<sup>536</sup>

However, this form of sentimental articulation has been given a “positive” scaffolding, built out of what Casid offered in her gardening analogy as “illusions of perennial abundance (reproducibility) and a well-balanced composition of variety (chiaroscuro)” (p. 171). Pneumatology was not only the “negative” alternative to recover what popular audiences (and those who theorize about them) co-opted for materialist readings in the marketplace, for example, popular readings of Erasmus Darwin. It was as well the principle theoretical basis for reading *Aline et Valcour*. The question of dialectics implied by this scaffolding does need to be accounted for as it crops up not only in secondary sources of the period, e.g., Adorno and Horkheimer’s *Dialektik der Aufklärung: Philosophische Fragmente*, but also in primary sources as well. It was Hegel’s use of the term in his 1807 *Phänemonologie des Geistes*, on the eve of Napoleon’s militaristic incursion into greater Europe that primed the tradition for its reoccurrence in posterity, its influence infusing works of such luminaries as Marx, Heidegger and Sartre. Dialectics was born neither ex nihilo nor even in the cultural milieu surrounding Jena in the Holy Roman Empire; it came on the wind of the revolutionary tide blowing out of France. Hegel even said so himself:

I saw the Emperor – this world-soul – riding out of the city on reconnaissance. It is indeed a wonderful sensation to see such an individual, who, concentrated here at a single point, astride a horse, reaches out over the world and masters it . . . this extraordinary man, whom it is impossible not to admire.<sup>537</sup>

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<sup>536</sup> John Gabriel Stedman, *Narrative of a five years' expedition, against the revolted negroes of Surinam, in Guiana, on the wild coast of South America; from the year 1772, to 1777: elucidating the history of that country, and describing its productions ... with an account of the Indians of Guiana, & negroes of Guinea* (London: J. Johnson St. Paul's Church Yard & Th. Payne Pall Mall, 1813), 1 (on Frontispiece).

<sup>537</sup> Terry P. Pinkard, *Hegel: a Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 228.

Fowler's reading of *Aline et Valcour* is illuminating in its misplacement as it anticipates the metaphysics of dialecticism<sup>538</sup> too premature to attribute to Sade at the time the novel was prepped to be published (1791)<sup>539</sup> as that self-proclaimed prophesy of the French Revolution. However, the relevance of Fowler's reading was not too far removed from that time when Sade could actually begin to grapple with and formulate his own conception of dialecticism in his own work. It is in *La Philosophie dans le boudoir* where a sea-change in Sade's attitude is detectable, a change in attitude caused by both his experience in and observation of the Revolution, unfolding before his eyes. This new perspective will then be set against trends developing conterminously in the sciences of the age, trends that too anticipate the arrival of this new metaphysics. Finally, from developing this, that last mode of discovery

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<sup>538</sup> Here is a description of how Fowler's analysis of Madame de Blamont fits better a reading of Hegelian dialecticism. This will be treated as a preliminary discussion of what will be laid out over the next ten pages. In his "lordship and bondage" analogy Hegel presents "negativity" as that relation which holds these two characters to their nominal statuses: the lord: '[he] relates himself immediately to the bondsman through a being (a thing) that is independent, for it is just this which holds the bondsman in bondage' (Ibid, 115), and the bondsman: '[...] the bondsman, qua self-consciousness in general, also relates himself negatively to the thing, and takes away its independence; but at the same time the thing is independent vis-à-vis the bondsman, whose negating of it, therefore, cannot go the length of being altogether done with it to the point of annihilation, in other words, he only works on it' (Ibid, 116). This 'positivity' that turns out 'independent' and 'inannihilable' despite the status of being in bondage marks off Hegel's version of 'negativity' as but an evanescent appearance, quickly buried under the 'working' of the bondsman's consciousness. The lord, who depends on this 'work' for his enjoyment and (pseudo-)independence, quickly learns that it is through this 'working' that the bondsman is truly independent. The bondsman is the 'positive' consciousness, unchained after the French Revolution; the lord, the perennial (natural) 'negativity' of relations on the eve of the bondsman realizing his 'positive' consciousness (or interiority). Hegel describes it this way: '[... the bondman's] consciousness is not this dissolution of everything stable merely in principle; in his service he *actually* brings this about. Through his service *he rides himself of this attachment to natural existence in every single detail; and gets rid of it by working on it*' (Ibid, 117) (Emphasis added). In Fowler's presentation, Madame de Blamont shows not only that this 'work' need not be laborious but merely articulated but also that the suffering that libertines crave to see place types like Madame de Blamont in a position of dependence where the *sensibilité* 'articulated' in suffering is done for some profit as if within that 'economy of sentiment' Smith identifies.

<sup>539</sup> Maurice Lever tells of how *Aline et Valcour* was just about ready to be published in 1791 after Sade had revised the work from the original 'Bastille' version. In the end the work was published in 1795 after a long delay caused by the tumult of the Revolution: 'On March 6 of [1791] the author had announced that it would be printed by Easter. On June 12 he said that publication was imminent. But thirty months later it was not finished. The reader will recall that when Sade's house was searched on December 8, 1793, Donatien had asked one of the policemen to pass three pages of manuscript on to his publisher Girouard. Unfortunately, Girouard was executed a few months later' (Maurice Lever, op. cit., 474). It is safe to assume that had the novel been mostly written in the Bastille, revised to suit the spirit of the revolution in its initial phases, any changes or additions done later would have had to conform with what was already written even if at the time of its actual publication Sade was already engaged in new metaphysical grapplings. *Aline et Valcour* when published would be more like a relic of both that earlier mind-set, i.e., the earlier "optimistic" period of the Revolution, and that even earlier pessimistic one, i.e., that one permeating his time in the Bastille. The evidence is that *Aline et Valcour* and *La Philosophie dans le boudoir*, actually published the same year (1793), did have distinct methodological orientations as will be soon confirmed.

will be laid out, completing the promised tripartite progression - the final stage being the “metaphysics of success”.

G.W.F. Hegel published his 1807 work *Phänemonologie des Geistes* at a time of great upheaval. The armies of Napoleon were advancing on the Germanic states and would soon incorporate the whole region into that French satellite, the Confederation of the Rhein. Much of the legacy of the French Revolution had been distilled in the foreign policies of Napoleon Bonaparte. He wielded many of its same promises of liberty, equality and fraternity (or, more pertinently, citizenry) against all forms of tyranny lying outside France’s borders. There is no clearer demonstration of this policy than in the pan-European dimension to the Napoleonic Code that promised such things as the abolition of the noble caste; freedom of religion; and something of a policy of equal opportunity for vocational advancement - all of which were installed on the condition of a French military victory. In “Consolidation of Power and the Napoleonic Codes - Comment on the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and the Napoleonic Codes” Kris C. Kirkwood highlights how the “right to free contract” removed traces of “negative” interference in both citizens’ relationships to the state; and, as well, entrepreneurs’, to their enterprises, these interferences coming from religious and feudal customs.<sup>540</sup> This made for new possibilities such as having the right to annul marriages by terminating mutually agreed-upon “contracts” (divorce) and to claim legal protection over what one declared as personal property.<sup>541</sup> Kirkwood, citing Tigar and Levy, summarizes this way the nature of these new relations:

Fundamentally the Code proclaimed only two commandments: A *material* one, that everyone should keep what he had, and a *personal* one, that everyone should mind his own business.<sup>542</sup>

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<sup>540</sup> Kris Kirkwood, ‘Consolidation of Power and the Napoleonic Codes - Comment on the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and the Napoleonic Codes’, *Valparaiso Law Review*, Vol. 18, Issue 3 (Valparaiso: Valparaiso University School of Law, 1983), 672.

<sup>541</sup> Ibid.

<sup>542</sup> Ibid. (Emphasis added)



What came with the violent manner these “positive” reforms were implemented was a growing cultural self-awareness of victimhood felt not just collectively but “personally” as well, irrespective of freedom’s promises. It is no wonder, as Napoleon approached Jena; Hegel was attempting to remedy these contradictions through those famous dialectical resolutions, to which belonged one novel formulation of humankind’s relationship with the world: “consciousness”. Something of this new form of “negativity” has been given a preliminary run-through in juxtaposing Sartre’s “de plus” and Hollard’s “en critique des lacunes et des excès de l’étude de l’autre”, a comparison raised for the purpose of considering the anachronism Fowler introduces in his interpretation of *Aline et Valcour*. In fact, Sade grappled with the same kinds of contradictions Hegel would, but more than a decade earlier. A summary of these contradictions has already been introduced in discussion of the inauthenticity on display in Sade’s eulogy for Marat and Le Pelletier. Sade sensed the same contradiction inherent in the universalist program the French Revolution fostered and the narrowness of personal concern it engendered, e.g., political factionalism, career advancement but, more importantly, personal safety. Both *Phänemonologie des Geistes* and *La Philosophie dans le boudoir* speak to similar observation about similar events at really two different phases of the French Revolution. The conclusions they make, however, are entirely distinct and are really the histories of two distinct formulations of “negativity”.

Seaver and Wainhouse take note of the slight change in inflection to the original epigraph of the frontispiece to *La Philosophie dans le boudoir* in the version published ten years later when Sade was an inmate at Charenton asylum. The original epigraph had stated: “La mere en *préscrira* la lecture à sa fille” to the new version: “La mere en *proscrira* la lecture à sa fille”. Questioning the degree of creative control Sade actually had over his oeuvre in his state of confinement, the two compilers/ editors call debate over the change

“moot” as going from “préscira” to “proscira” is of only incidental concern.<sup>543</sup> But the reversal is far too diametrical to dismiss so hastily as unimportant: how can making the work something mothers would forbid (proscira) their daughters to read only ten years after having claimed the opposite be held as something minor? The importance of the original epigraph is that it encapsulates a timely message Sade was delivering to those young French citizens of the period. In many ways it was Rousseau’s instruction to *Émile* but delivered at a time when the Physiocrats’ vision of “honesty”, “plain-dealing” and “self-reliance” was ebbing (p. 51) and a new reality of “positivities” of laws, claims to rights and performance demands becoming the norms for living in a new revolutionary society. The young maiden, Eugénie, apprentice to the licentious Madame de Saing-Ange and the rake, Dolmance, is inculcated with just as much urgency and concern for her well-being as *Émile* was by Rousseau. In the following passage, Rousseau expressed his aim to instill independence in *Émile* and promote resistance to social forces destined to mould and enfeeble this young boy:

God makes all things good; man meddles with them and they become evil. He forces one soil to yield the products of another, one tree to bear another's fruit. He confuses and confounds time, place, and natural conditions. He mutilates his dog, his horse, and his slave. He destroys and defaces all things; he loves all that is deformed and monstrous; he will have nothing as nature made it, not even man himself, who must learn his paces like a saddle-horse, and be shaped to his master's taste like the trees in his garden.<sup>544</sup>

Sade, speaking through Madame Sainte-Ange and Dolmance, sets up a counter-education program to the one Rousseau had designed and continues to follow the same “negative” course already seen making Rousseau and Sade kindred spirits. Of course, Sade chose vice over its cognate: virtue as the teaching style. Sade’s work demanded new solutions to new sets of problems in entirely new historical circumstances compared with those extant three decades earlier when Rousseau published *Émile*. And where Hegel would offer acquiescence to these similarly new conditions - and ultimately establish a manual for those in posterity to follow - Sade in *La Philosophie dans le boudoir* offers a robust rebuttal, a defence of his

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<sup>543</sup> Richard Seaver, Austryn Wainhouse, “[Preliminary Commentary to “Philosophy in the Bedroom”]”, *Marquis de Sade: Justine, Philosophy in the Bedroom, & Other Writings*, op. cit., 180.

<sup>544</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile, or On Education*, op. cit., 37.

trademark “negativity”. The book comprises six dialogues of general metaphysics, delivered half in orgiastic reveries; half in contemplative discussion in recovery (metaphysical “pillow talk”) with the insertion in the fifth dialogue of a political tract called “Français, encore un effort, si vous voulez être républicain” read aloud by Dolmance, whose curious inclusion has bewildered many, some of whom have taken it to be unnecessary and artless.<sup>545</sup> As was the case in *Aline et Valcour*, initial narratives link to parallel ones, in manners by no means fortuitous. This polemical tract, coming midway through the dialogues, appends a “special metaphysics” to the “general” one that is presented in the rest of the dialogues. The target audience for the polemic would have been well acquainted with the vagaries of the Jacobin-led “Reign of Terror”, whose subject matter the political tract broaches. Given the subtle ties *La Philosophie dans le boudoir* shares with *Phänemonologie des Geistes*, the two will be juxtaposed for what they distinctively elucidate about the emergence of the epistemological conception of “interiority”.

*La Philosophie dans le boudoir* iterates many of the same themes brought up in the other works already discussed and it is worth reviewing some of them to demonstrate how it was continuity that brought Sade to his critical positioning, concerning the new condition he saw enveloping him. In *Les 120 Journées sensibilité* was assigned a mobility to descend the depths of the precipices of “negativity”, depths established as that chute following deeper and deeper progressions of the calendar and the narrations of those storytellers of Silling Château, marking the passage of an almanac. In his anachronism Fowler wants to see Sade and *sensibilité* as that shallow circularity marking the dialectical turn. “Sensibilité can suggest a tearful response to happy as well as unhappy events”, says Fowler and follows these options in the direction of “malheurs” where the extent of Sade’s inquiry falls to this circular

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<sup>545</sup> Gilbert Lély, op. cit., 394. \* ‘But however interesting this pamphlet may be in itself, some of the notions of the dialogues being given a sociological backing which lends them force, it remains non the less true that this long treatise, so arbitrarily inserted in a work which is otherwise so well constructed, to some extent spoils the balance.’ (Full quotation)

question: “[...] does misfortune enhance the *sensibilité* of the virtuous to the point where they might actually wish to suffer (?)”.<sup>546</sup> In *La Philosophie dans le boudoir* Sade sees *sensibilité* much like how he traced the journey of his “four heroes” towards say that point of blasphemy in the first week of December under the aegis of the narrator Champville. Dolmance gets to this point rather quickly and encourages Eugénie to follow suit into these depths:

[...] one of my largest pleasures is to swear in God’s name when I’m stiff. It seems then that my spirit, at such a moment exalted a thousand times more, abhors, scorns this disgusting fiction; I would like to discover some way better to revile it or to outrage it further; and when my accursed musings lead me to the conviction of the nullity of this repulsive object of my hatred, I am irritated and would instantly like to be able to re-edify the phantom so that my rage might at least fall upon some target: imitate me, charming women, and you will observe such discourses *to increase without fail your sensibility* [...].<sup>547</sup>

The shallow depth of concern, coming out of the dialecticism shown to be grounded on “a reference back to one’s own articulation set before an imagined audience”, i.e., Fowler’s interpretation of Madame de Blamant (p. 212), has the same proximal concern in production as the “generation rule” evinced by Diderot did in his exploration of the island population of Otaïti. Sade already resorted to a distal concern in his defence of sterility, described as an anodyne against proximity. Zamé’s concern for the sterile amongst the population of Tamoeé and this island’s law concerning divorce are familiar examples (p. 206). To Eugénie’s question on whether or not her impending sodomization by Dolmance be natural or not, Dolmance makes out of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah a “miracle” of nature much like the “lavas “submerge[ing]” Vesuvius but with this irony: it be a “torture by fire” set against those who would enact such a crime against generation.<sup>548</sup> Dolmance scoffs in a “let-the-punishment-fit-the-crime” argument that the “misuse” of “procreative sperm” hardly qualifies as destruction since much of its contents are wasted anyway. In a reversal of the terms he implies that for every drop wasted by the “populator” in trying to reproduce they

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<sup>546</sup> Peter Fowler, op. cit., 58.

<sup>547</sup> Marquis de Sade, ‘Philosophy in the Bedroom’, op. cit., 241-43. (Emphasis added)

<sup>548</sup> Ibid, 273-74.

merit the same punishment as the one the sodomite is obliged to incur.<sup>549</sup> In both these examples, Sade is consistently asserting a “negative” position, bucking those “positive” trends he most certainly recognized infiltrating French society. Hegel would have recognized similar trends in his context and now it is time to analyse how his position diverged from Sade’s.

Hegel gave evidence of how negativity would increasingly be built out of a cleavage between human experience and the natural world. Negativity became for Hegel the seat of his notion of the “in-itself”, a murky site where the implications of individuals “determinately” cavorting with (other) objects (as a “for-itself”) befell a position of not only needing objects but also “need being” ones. This position cannot be seen as too different from the implications already built out of Sade’s eulogy for Marat and Le Peletier: “objects pursued” (anteriority) and “objects doing the pursuing” (interiority) find a new theatrical model for a new society, one engendered by the French Revolution (p. 145). Hegel’s dialectical resolution followed this logic:

The limitation of being [...] cannot limit the action of consciousness, for here *consciousness is a relation purely of itself to itself: relation to an other, which would be a limitation of it, has been eliminated*.<sup>550</sup>

Hegel goes on to compare this relationship of “itself to itself” with animals in the animal kingdom; and if a moral scientist like Sade could draw in both determinate and indeterminate forms, organic and inorganic alike, Hegel made it structurally impossible, introducing an insurmountable isolation:

[the individual’s] realization is simply in a reciprocal relation with itself; just as in the case of indeterminate animal life, which breathes the breath of life, let us say, into elements of water, or air or earth and within these again into more specific principles, steeping its entire nature in them, and yet keeping that nature under its own control, and preserving itself as a unity, in spite of the limitation imposed by the elements, and remaining in the form of this particular organization [...].<sup>551</sup>

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<sup>549</sup> Ibid, 275. \* Dolmance adds this more general principle: if ‘[...] nature intends this spermatoc liquid to be employed only and entirely for reproduction [...] she would not permit its spillage under any circumstances save those appropriate to that end’. (Full quotation)

<sup>550</sup> G.W.F Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 238. (Emphasis added)

<sup>551</sup> Ibid, p. 238. (Emphasis added)

Sade would have rejected this isolation, calling all forms of this “control and preserv[ation...] as a unity” “*ne plus ultra* of human reason” (in the case of humankind) or some illusional self-importance in however way it is expressed amongst other organic and inorganic forms.

He offered a “negative” scale, by which all could be united:

[...] if man is thus proven as ancient of the world [...] he is but as the oak, as grain, as the mineral to be found in the earth’s entrails, who are bound only to reproduce [...] which owes its own to nothing whatsoever.<sup>552</sup>

Sade’s pantheism here dialogues in an interesting way with how Spinoza in *Ethics* aimed as well at surmounting the isolation making humankind the measure for all that belongs to its domain. He articulates it this way:

[...] they find -- both in themselves and outside themselves -- many means that are helpful in seeking their own advantage, for example, eyes for seeing, teeth for chewing, plants and animals for food, the sun for light, the sea for supporting fish [...] And knowing that they found these means, not provided for themselves, they had reason to believe that there was someone else, but from the means they were accustomed to prepare for themselves, they had to infer that there was a ruler, a number of rulers, of Nature, endowed with human freedom and who had taken care of all such things, and made all things for their use.<sup>553</sup>

Sade would agree with Spinoza’s conclusion that this line of reasoning would customize God to be the supreme being of this small enclave, and only this enclave, this one that eats the same “fish” from this particular spot of the “sea”. Spinoza sees respite from this illusion in “rest” where only in movement do “the ideas which we have of external objects indicate the condition of our own body more than the nature of the external bodies”,<sup>554</sup> i.e., fishes are less what they actually are than what they are for human use. As discussed in Chapter 1.3, God lies outside the contingency of nature, uninfluenced by movement. And movement for Spinoza is necessarily passionate so (restful) virtue is only possible through reason that brings about communion between God and humankind.<sup>555</sup> Sade calls what Spinoza extolled here as virtue “inactive from pure selfishness”; and lauds the “whore” for her constrasting

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<sup>552</sup> Marquis de Sade, ‘Philosophy in the Bedroom’, op. cit., 209.

<sup>553</sup> Spinoza, op. cit., 26.

<sup>554</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>555</sup> Spinoza’s notion of virtue was closely connected to reason and the ability not to let causation (as motion) come unawares; when (motionless) reason exists, virtue comes necessarily as a concomitant. And both are seen as anodynes against passion and constitute the possibility of freedom: ‘An affect which is a passion is a confused idea [...] Therefore, if we should form a clear and distinct idea of the affect itself, this idea will only be distinguished by reason from the affect itself, insofar as it is related only to the mind [...] Therefore [...] the affect will cease to be a passion’ (Ibid, 163).

*active selflessness*.<sup>556</sup> Sade takes the movement that troubled Spinoza in his view of the natural world to be the most general of all principles and God, the greatest of subterfuges:

if it is proven that his God's existence is impossible, and that Nature, forever in action, forever moving, has of herself what it pleases idiots to award God gratuitously [...] he would be of all things the most ridiculous, since he would have been useful only one single time and thereafter and throughout millions of centuries, fixed in a contemptible stillness and inactivity [...].<sup>557</sup>

Reason as rest and virtue as its beginning both constitute the "positive" pathway to God as anything perfectly restful is necessarily isolated, cut off from the "negativity" of all other extrinsic relations. Hegel's definition of "Spirit" rises in a like manner as Spinoza's - towards the knowledge of God:

Reason is Spirit when its certainty of being all reality has been raised to truth, and it is conscious of itself as its own world, and of the world as itself.<sup>558</sup>

In both their "positive" formulations, Spinoza and Hegel had an interest in warning readers - individuals and societies alike - of the perils "negativity" brings with it as relations. Spinoza called these perils symptoms of "inadequate ideas" while Hegel called them "the way of the world". In Dolmance and Madame Saint-Ange's lectures to Eugénie they spoke equally of these perils but offered much different solutions. It is worth setting up the contrast between these shared recognitions.

In the section, "Virtue and the way of the world" Hegel builds on what he developed in the previous section of his work, "The law of the heart and the frenzy of self-conceit" where the effluvia of all sentiment (of the heart) finds discord and ultimately falls victim to an alien necessity, which is the order of a cruel world,<sup>559</sup> or in Hegel's words, "the way of the world". In macro-form virtue fails for the same reason the "heart" does:

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<sup>556</sup> Marquis de Sade, 'Philosophy in the Bedroom', op. cit., 209. \* In Dolmance's denigration of the virtuous woman he implies that her counterpart, the whore, is the one to deserve the accolades for her selflessness: 'There is ambition, there pride, there you find self-seeking, and often, again, it is a question of mere constitutional numbness, or torpor: there are beings who have no urges. Are we, I ask, to revere such as them? No; the virtuous woman acts, or is inactive, from pure selfishness. Is it then better, wiser, more just to perform sacrifices to egoism that to one's passions'. (Full quotation)

<sup>557</sup> Ibid, 209-10.

<sup>558</sup> Hegel, op. cit., 263.

<sup>559</sup> G.W.F Hegel, op. cit., 222. \* '[...] reality is [...] on the one hand a law by which the particular individuality is oppressed, a violent ordering of the world which contradicts the law of the heart, and, on the other hand, a

[...] it wants to consist in bringing the good into actual existence by the sacrifice of individuality, but the side of reality is itself nothing else but the side of individuality [...] the in-itself.<sup>560</sup>

Both levels collapse here on account of how the architecture of “consciousness” was developed in his dialectic. The “law of the heart”, he described as movements seeking to unite with objects and produce new forms; these movements ultimately end up working for the “for-itself”, however. Whatever sentiment may imbue these movements, they are unable themselves to be enshrined into the final conglomerate, a conglomerate not recognized by the

[...] in-itself”[;] it is taken rather as “something already given [...] hold[ing...] its essential nature [...] to be for its own self, or the negative element relatively to this positive in-itself.”<sup>561</sup>

Hegel’s elegiac account of the loss of virtue here is given a much different reception by Sade, who is happy to extend it a lifeline even as it lay interred in a corpse of its former self. Far from denigrating virtue Dolmance celebrates it and tells Eugénie that

[...] so long as the man who must live amongst other men appears virtuous, it matters not in the slightest whether he is so in fact [...] Deceit [...] is almost always an assured means to success.<sup>562</sup>

At a point in the narrative when Sade first foreshadows Eugénie’s participation in the murder of her own mother, he has Dolmance present to her instructions on performing the most convincing of dissimulations for the most cut-throat of deeds. He used as a model Nero and his display of heartfelt sympathies for Agrippina (his mother) on the very barque he used to set her ablaze.<sup>563</sup> Unlike in Hegel’s account where negativity is the difference between the “for-itself” and “in-itself” at the moment of articulation - the tracks of difference

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humanity suffering under that ordering, a humanity that does not follow the law of the heart, but is subjected to an alien necessity. It is evident that this real world which appears over against the present form of consciousness is nothing else but the foregoing discordant relationship of individuality and its truth, the relationship of a cruel necessity by which the former is oppressed.’ (Full quotation)

<sup>560</sup> G.W.F Hegel, op. cit., 233. \* ‘The in-itself is, in the first instance, the abstraction of essence in contrast to reality; but an abstraction is precisely what is not true, but exists only for consciousness, which means, however, that it is itself what is called real; for the real is that which is essentially for another, or is being. But the consciousness of virtue rests on the distinction between in-self and being, a distinction which has no truth. The ‘way of the world’ was supposed to be the perversion of the good because it had individuality for its principle; only individuality that is consciousness, whereby what exists in itself exists equally for an other; it does pervert the Unchangeable, it perverts it in fact from the nothing of abstraction into the being of reality.’ (Full quotation)

<sup>561</sup> Ibid, p. 222.

<sup>562</sup> Marquis de Sade, “Philosophy in the Bedroom”, op. cit., 246.

<sup>563</sup> Ibid, 245. \* ‘Move closer than ever to your victim before destroying her; have the look of sympathy for her, seem to worship her; do yet more: persuade her of it: deceit, in such instances, cannot be carried too far. Nero caressed Agrippina upon the deck of the very bark with which she was to be engulfed: imitate this example [...] To lie is always a necessity for women; above all when they choose to deceive, falsehood becomes vital to them.’ (Full quotation)



instantaneously covered up by the articulated “in-itself” as the new baseline - Sade makes of the whole of both structures a ruse. Deception is the admission that the whole of the performer/ performance be fraudulent, to the effect of either sinking “interiority” itself into the “negativity” of its predecessors: “anteriority” and “posteriority”; or making out of “interiority” something of a “negative” possibility, otherwise impossible if Hegel’s claim to the “positive” in-itself be accepted wholesale. This bouleversement is on display throughout that pamphlet Sade inserts into the Fifth Dialogue: “Français, encore un effort”. This peculiar political tract has been a stumbling block for many who have grappled with its enigmatic meaning. It is to this document that the focus will now shift, this document, expounding the “special metaphysics” to what has so far been the “general” in the rest of *La Philosophie dans le boudoir*.

Sade’s “special metaphysics” was delivered after his barely missed appointment with the guillotine during the Reign of Terror that only began to subside with the execution of its architect-in-chief, Robespierre. Released six weeks after the death of this revolutionary leader, Sade was certainly motivated to set his pen to vitriol against the legacy this iconic figure bequeathed to the revolution. In the first section to “Français, encore un effort”, titled “Religion”, Sade warns of the imminent return of God to society and entreats all citizens to be on guard and make:

[o]ne more effort; since you labor to destroy all the old foundations, do not permit one of them to survive, for let but one endure, ‘tis enough, the rest will be restored.<sup>564</sup>

Sade sees “the infamous Robespierre wish[ing] to call him [God] forth”<sup>565</sup> and Lever suggests that it was Robespierre’s resurgent theism<sup>566</sup> that would have brought Sade to this recognition. In his inaugural dedication of the Festival of the Supreme Being, Robespierre summons God back from the revolution’s ashes as if by metaphysical incantation:

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<sup>564</sup> Ibid, 301.

<sup>565</sup> Ibid.

<sup>566</sup> Maurice Lever, op. cit., 476.

If the satellites of tyranny can assassinate you, it is not in their power entirely to destroy you. Man, whoever thou mayest be, thou canst still conceive high thoughts for thyself. Thou canst bind thy fleeting life to God, and to immortality. Let nature seize again all her splendour, and wisdom all her empire! The Supreme Being has not been annihilated.<sup>567</sup>

It was neither a pragmatic decision to bring God back from disrepute to fill say a societal niche he saw lacking in the chaos of the revolution nor a strategic one to expose what he believed were dissimulating aristocrats hiding behind fervent atheism: “[...] declaring war on divinity is only a diversion in favor of royalty”.<sup>568</sup> Rather the reason was a decision to offer up a metaphysical position he believed was the only one suitable for the course of the Revolution. It would have been difficult for Sade to outdo in radicalism the actions of the Jacobins and the metaphysical position this movement’s leader imparted; however, the tract *Dolmance* recites in the presence of his fellow libertines is just such a document. In *Sade mon prochain* Klossowski distinguished Sade’s “kingdom of integral man” from the Jacobins and their “wishes to make the natural man live”.<sup>569</sup> This could be interpreted as Sade’s remonstrance to the most extreme of the revolutionaries for failing in their revolutionary stupor and personal opportunisms to recognize that something irreversible had taken place in the history they were enacting. Robespierre, however, would have agreed with the spirit of Sade’s critical assessment though from a different metaphysical position. For this reason Klossowski’s assertion can not actually cover Robespierre on this point. Slavoj Žižek comes to the heart of the matter, spelling out the scale of Robespierre’s metaphysical vision for the Revolution, a vision Žižek describes as guided by “Divine Violence”, a vision that countered a revolution that was

[...] respecting social rules, subordinating to pre-existing norms [...] reduced to a strategic intervention serving precise and limited goals.<sup>570</sup>

<sup>567</sup> Maximilien Robespierre, ‘Speech on the Cult of the Supreme Being, 1794 (Excerpts)’, Internet *Modern History Sourcebook* (New York: Fordham University: Jesuit University of New York, 1997), 1.

<sup>568</sup> Maximilien Robespierre, ‘On the Principles of Political Morality that Should Guide the National Convention in the Domestic Administration of the Republic’, *Robespierre: Virtue and Terror* (London: Verso, 2007), 119. \* ‘Preaching atheism is merely a way of absolving superstition and accusing philosophy; and declaring war on divinity is only a diversion in favour of royalty.’ (Full quotation)

<sup>569</sup> Pierre Klossowski, op. cit., 51.

<sup>570</sup> Slavoj Žižek, ‘Robespierre, or, the ‘Divine Violence’ of Terror’, *Robespierre: Virtue and Terror* (London: Verso, 2007), xi.

In “Français, encore un effort” Sade sets violence to the same amplitude as this “divine” variant Žižek speaks of but pushes beyond what depths Robespierre reaches in his own plunge into *sensibilité*, depths not too far in profundity from points Sade had reached in works such as *Les 120 Journées*. The lesson learned from Dolmance’s recital would only be revealed in post-discussions, in that debate between Dolmance and Madame Saint-Ange’s brother, Le Chevalier. In this heated exchange Sade gives voice to Robespierre through Dolmance’s attack on Le Chevalier, who ventriloquizes Robespierre’s detractors, whose surreptitious schemes brought about his downfall. Through Dolmance, Sade would then shift Robespierre’s metaphysical ground in a new direction. The novelty of Sade’s position here constitutes what has already been called his “special metaphysics”.

The synonymy Žižek implies in making both “virtue” and “terror” cognates in the book’s title is certainly no surprise considering how “negativity” has been presented in this dissertation. There has been something ferocious in what fills out the “plenum”, a ferocity on display in Rousseau’s presentation of “virtue” particularly potent in his *Dialogues*, surprising even Jacques-Henri Meister, who called the work, one of a “dark imagination” and “delirium” (p. 63). And there is of course parallel virtue and vice in not only Rousseau’s “insensitive” character, Wolmar, in *La nouvelle Héloïse* and Sade’s four “heroes” of Silling Château but also the scale of objects, with which Rousseau and Sade worked in their respective oeuvre, for example, Wolmar’s special (“negative”) diet for Julie and the coprophilic offerings by Sade at the dining table at Silling Château (p. 116). Žižek’s theoretical analysis of virtue and terror in Robespierre’s speeches is noteworthy for it really covers terrain extensively navigated in this dissertation and does so even evoking the question of “negativity” and “positivity”. Žižek utilizes as his exploratory rubric: “Humanism and Terror”, introduced by Maurice Merleau-Ponty. He argued that the justification for this conjunction depended on whether or not Stalinist terror, beginning to become apparent in Western media at the time,

leads to the creation of a “truly human” society.<sup>571</sup> Žižek sees this to be a “positive” outcome to this formulation but introduces three other variations including two that substitute the “and” for an “or”. The “negative” formulation: “Humanism and Terror” is the orientations spoken of by “Heidegger, conservative Christians, partisans of Oriental spirituality or deep ecology”, who see terror to be the truth consequential of the hubris imbued humanism.<sup>572</sup> This “negative” species dialogues with what has been presented as Hegel’s vision of that “cleavage between human experience and the natural world” (p. 220). Of the first “or” variation, Žižek mentions the formulation: “Humanism or Terror”, the “liberal-progressivist” project (“positive” on the side of Humanism) that upholds humanism to the occlusion (“negation”) of any (Stalinist) totalitarian and fundamentalist terror. The other version of this “or” variant makes “humanism” the “negated” term; and “terror”, in his words, the “positive” one, explaining this radical position as one of “inhumanity”.<sup>573</sup> To describe its formation he recruits Freud, Levinas and Lacan, whose theoretical departures assume human relations be something of abyssal voids; Žižek utilizes science fiction characters to familiarize the reader with what is otherwise uncanny in his assertion:

The best way to approach it is via Freud’s reluctance to endorse in the injunction ‘Love thy neighbors! – the temptation to be resisted here is the ethical domestication of the neighbour – for example, what Emmanuel Levinas did with his notion of the neighbor as the abyssal point from which the call of ethical responsibility emanates. What Levinas thereby obfuscates is the monstrosity of the neighbor, a monstrosity on account of which Lacan applies to the neighbor the term Thing (das Ding), used by Freud to designate the ultimate object of our desires in its unbearable intensity and impenetrability [...] this inhuman dimension can be defined as that of a subject subtracted from all form of human ‘individuality’ or ‘personality’ [...] one of the exemplary figures of a pure subject is a non-human - alien, cyborg – who displays more fidelity to its task and to dignity and freedom than its human counterparts.<sup>574</sup>

Critical in Žižek’s formulation here is the failure to adequately define “negativity”. In one case “negativity” is “negation” as what is used, for example, in the aforementioned final “or”

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<sup>571</sup> Ibid, xiii.

<sup>572</sup> Ibid.

<sup>573</sup> Ibid. \* ‘There is, however, a fourth version, usually left aside: the choice “humanism *or* terror”, but with terror, not humanism, as the positive term. This is a radical position difficult to sustain, but, perhaps, our only hope: it does not amount to the obscene madness of openly pursuing a ‘terrorist’ in inhuman politics’ but something much more difficult to think through. In today’s ‘post-deconstructionist’ thought [...] the term ‘inhuman’ has gained new weight [...]’ (Full quotation)

<sup>574</sup> Ibid, xiv-xv.

conjunction where “humanism” simply vanishes as a term for consideration. In another case, the second “and” conjunction, “negativity” is dialecticism where “humanism” and “terror” are incorporated into the final concept. Such a misconception naturally makes “positivity” the default symmetrical term to describe all of what is only nominally “negative”. What ought to have been done to describe “negativity” is follow what has been conceptualized as “negative” in this dissertation. This “subtraction [of] all forms of human ‘individuality’ or ‘personality’”, the “unbearable intensity and impenetrability” in the pursuit of the object and, as well, that “rejection of habit” he speaks of in the “inhuman dimension of the couple of Virtue-Terror”<sup>575</sup> are all important “negative” attributes of the “plenum”: its privilege of distal over proximal concerns, “ellipses” marking out its inner sanctum, filled with passion that medium that extirpates all objects and uniformities. What’s more, this is not the terrain of something as unnatural as an “alien” or “cyborg”; more to the point, Robespierre was very much interested in seeing negativity as a phenomenon of nature. In his “On the Trial of the King” speech he likens the “virtue” of the people to what appears “in our timid eyes as something like an erupting volcano or the overthrow of political society”<sup>576</sup> and makes his extra-legal case for the execution of the king as one of a “negative” refutation of the inevitable “positive” outcome had the process been mediated by laws. Harkening back to his famous “defen[ce of] de Visseray de Bois-Valé’s right to erect a lightning rod on the roof of his house” (p. 25) in that trial Riskin raises as exemplifying the repudiation of “positive” facts of moral scientists of the period, Robespierre again sees “lightening” as a truth in an equally “negative” light:

People do not judge in the same way as courts of law; they do not hand down sentences, *they throw thunderbolts*; they do not condemn kings, they drop them back into the void; and this justice is worth just as much as that of the courts. If it is for their salvation that they take arms against their oppressors, how can they be made to adopt a way of punishing them that would pose a new danger to themselves?<sup>577</sup>

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<sup>575</sup> Ibid, xviii.

<sup>576</sup> Maximilien Robespierre, ‘On the Trial of the King’, op. cit, 59.

<sup>577</sup> Ibid. (Emphasis added)

Sade's "Français, encore un effort" is a direct dialogue with Robespierre, delivered in a format with which Robespierre himself would have been familiar as chief political orator to the Convention. Aside from like contexts, the two are also dialoguing in a similar dialect of *sensibilité* and for all the emphasis being drawn to their contrastive metaphysic positions; the two share poignant similarities, which are worth highlighting before going on to the differences.

The rhetorical tone of the political orators, Robespierre and Dolmance, could not have been any more different to the untrained ear. What would otherwise seem like respective clashes of moral rectitude and anarchic immoralism is but the mere case of virtue of the one and vice of the other, being positioned along the same spectrum in the "plenum" with vice emerging as the mere uptick in amplitude, surging past virtue's "digital" concern for what what is either "congenial" or "inimical" to the welfare of humankind (p. 28). On the question of laws, Robespierre, in his speech on the "Draft Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen" expressly states that the less there are the better for any surfeit promotes inequality amongst citizens:

You add more and more articles to ensure the greatest liberty for the exercise of property, but said not a single word to determine its legitimate character, so that your declaration appears to be made, not for men, but for the rich, for monopolists, for spectators and tyrants.<sup>578</sup>

Sade would begin the section, "Manners" of his "Français, encore un effort" with the same call for parsimony in laws for the very same reason of inequality. He argues for "leniency" in laws as any forced generalization is an imposition of tyranny in their own right: "[...] it is a terrible injustice to require that men of unlike character be ruled by the same law."<sup>579</sup> Transposing these two documents in question is a worthwhile exercise as both attest to just how spectrally close the author's positions are; the only difference being the deep digitality

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<sup>578</sup> Maximilien Robespierre, 'Draft Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen', op. cit., 67.

<sup>579</sup> Marquis de Sade, 'Philosophy in the Bedroom', op. cit., 310.

virtue upholds; and this digitality's extirpation by vice. Article IV of the *Declaration* delineates "digitality's" "negative" depth:

Liberty is the power that man has to exercise all his faculties at will. Justice is its rule, the rights of others are its boundaries, nature is its principle and law its safeguard.<sup>580</sup>

And from this, cascades panoply of enforcements of "boundaries" including rights to one's discursive property (Article V), material property (Article VI) and bodily property (Article XXVII). Sade punctures the boundaries "virtue" assumes in the *Declaration*, doing so by unraveling the articles that necessarily follow from Article IV and, what is more, preserving the same spirit of equality implied in their enforcement. Sade advocates leniency for the "crime" of calumny and thus the inviolability of just that discursive property presupposed in Article V. Sade argues that:

[...] it makes little difference if one imputes a little more evil to a man known for having done a great deal of it [...] or] for this virtuous and sensitive man, stung by the injustice [...] will apply himself to the cultivation of still greater virtue [...].<sup>581</sup>

For material property, Sade advocates theft be something to be praised as it both instills rigorous concern for what one possesses; and it is a "crime" best suited for encouraging the distribution of material equality amongst citizens.<sup>582</sup> Sade extends a similar logic of "equality" of bodily property to crimes of rape and murder, both of which are liberties, he claims, are perfectly endowed by nature and suitable for the integrity of the state. Sade calls on rape to be permitted as a

[...] free flight and rein to those tyrannical desire, which [...] torment man ceaselessly: content with having been able to exercise his small dominion in the middle of the harem of sultanas and youths whose submission your good offices and his money procure for him, he will go away appeased and with nothing but fond feelings for a government [...].<sup>583</sup>

As for murder, Sade speaks of it as the most natural of phenomena, one even lauded by nature, who is always in need of raw materials to go on with its art of regeneration:

<sup>580</sup> Maximilien Robespierre, 'Draft Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen', op. cit., 69.

<sup>581</sup> Marquis de Sade, 'Philosophy in the Bedroom', op. cit., 312.

<sup>582</sup> Ibid, 313. \* '[...] is theft, whose effect is to distribute wealth more evenly to be branded as a wrong in our day, under our government which aims at equality? Plainly, the answer is no: it furthers equality and, what is more, renders more difficult the conservation of property. There was once a people who punished not the thief but him who allowed himself to be robbed, in order to teach him how to care for his property.' (Full quotation)

<sup>583</sup> Ibid, 317.

If all individuals were possessed of eternal life, would it not become impossible for Nature to create any new ones?<sup>584</sup>

For the king, whom Sade advises best not become embroiled in the tit-for-tat of the cycle of murderous exchanges, he recommends the wisdom of Louis XV, whose clemency to Charolais, the murderer; and whose promised pardon for whomever would seek revenge for Charolais' crime<sup>585</sup> guarantees justice while preserving equality for all. The equality Sade expounds on in all these cases is of filiation with that in Robespierre's vision, the difference being of course a minor modulation to what fills out the "plenum". Nothing better exemplifies this filiation than both Sade and Robespierre's opposition to capital punishment and advocacy of a pacifist foreign policy. Sade shared Robespierre's antipathy for the legal killing of individuals deemed criminal according to the laws of a state, arguing such "proximal" bases as "individual" crimes and corresponding legal articles be not "in keeping with the indestructible principles of nature"; and it is only in such a "distal" position where capital punishment is suitable "for the security of individuals or the social body".<sup>586</sup> Failure to understand this distinction has earned Robespierre the accusation of hypocrisy in lieu of his murderous tenure as leader during the Reign of Terror. But his executive orders to keep the guillotine well-greased were all quite consistent with his metaphysics. Sade too decried capital punishment for much the same reason as Robespierre and again the issue becomes one of the "negativity" of distality and the "positivity" of proximity:

[...] one feels, the necessity to make flexible, mild laws and especially to get rid forever of the atrocity of capital punishment, because the law which attempts a man's life is impractical, unjust, inadmissible [...] men have freely taken one another's lives, simply exercising a prerogative received from their common mother; but it is impossible for the law to obtain the same privilege, since the law, cold and impersonal is a total stranger to the passions which are able to justify in man the cruel act of murder.<sup>587</sup>

Something of the same logic underpins both metaphysicians' opposition to war-mongering abroad even when following the banner of liberty. In his speech "On the War" Robespierre

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<sup>584</sup> Ibid, 330.

<sup>585</sup> Ibid, 337.

<sup>586</sup> Maximilien Robespierre, 'On the Trial of the King', op. cit., 64.

<sup>587</sup> Marquis de Sade, 'Philosophy in the Bedroom', op. cit., 310.



entreats his listeners to ease off the drumbeat intensifying for calls to militarism by Brissot, the leader of the Girondins, who sought to transport the Revolution abroad. Robespierre calls such a policy a distraction from unfinished business on the domestic front, and worse, a new foothold for counter-revolutionaries to seize as, in his view, it was the pride of the “aristocratic toadies [who] are repeating the war cry”.<sup>588</sup> Robespierre warns that the despotism that can make “liberty appear suspect and frightening” be a condition of “prejudice, the habits, and the education of the peoples”. All of these need to be changed gradually from the bottom-up and not top-down from an invading force; furthermore, he states: “no one likes armed missionaries”.<sup>589</sup> The spirit of Robespierre’s pacifist foreign policy is inscribed in Article XXXVII of the *Declaration* where tyranny abroad is not described with the “us vs. them” designation inherent in the notion of national armies but with language implying tyranny be an issue of only domestic concern:

Those who make war on a people to arrest the progress of liberty and annihilate the rights of man should be pursued by all, not as ordinary enemies but as murderers and rebellious brigands.<sup>590</sup>

Sade also articulates a pacifist foreign policy where any influence spreading abroad ought to be that of imitability due to the fruits of good governance seen from afar - not by the

[...] zeal to broaden your principles to lead you further afield; it is only with fire and steel you will be able to carry them to the four corners of the earth [...] remember the unsuccess of the crusades.<sup>591</sup>

Sade makes foreign invasion something of a “proximal” concern for one’s own national pride as it is “for the vainglory of establishing your principles outside your country” and, like Robespierre, Sade makes such a “positive” concern a foothold for tyranny’s return:

[...] you neglect to care for your own felicity at home, despotism, which is no more than asleep, will awake, you will be rent by intestine disorder, you will have exhausted your monies and your soldiers [...].<sup>592</sup>

This “intestine disorder” could very well be a pneumatological reference to that corruption appearing countless time in this dissertation, against which moral scientists of the period

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<sup>588</sup> Maximilien Robespierre, Extracts from ‘On the War’, op. cit., 30.

<sup>589</sup> Ibid, 31.

<sup>590</sup> Maximilien Robespierre, ‘Draft Declaration of the Rights of Man’, op. cit., 72.

<sup>591</sup> Marquis de Sade, ‘Philosophy in the Bedroom’, op. cit., 338-339.

<sup>592</sup> Ibid.

worked. If “Français, encore un effort” is a “vice-imbued” inflection of many of the “virtuous” speeches Robespierre gave as orator-in-chief to the Convention, what constitutes Sade’s “special metaphysics” is his refutation of Robespierre and his desire to steer the revolution back to God, a desire Sade well knew was a road with no return, one he had already tested in his metaphysics of failure in *Les 120 Journées*. As stated earlier, it is in the exchange between Dolmance and Le Chevalier where Sade offers his critical response to Robespierre, with whom he otherwise shared a similar depth of *sensibilité*.

The seraglio greeted Dolmance’s recitation of “Français, encore un effort” with great adulation and enthusiasm, stirring up a discussion that marks a critical moment in the oeuvre of Sade. It was Sade’s own self-correction of a failure he may have intuited was long present even in his own metaphysics, one particularly salient and on display in the new historical conditions he sensed surrounded him in 1795. Not satisfied with what had been seen as an “unnatural” path, suggested as finding its most succinct articulation years later in Hegel’s *Phänomenologie des Geistes* when the “interiority” of human subjectivity began to be unbound from the strictures of nature, Sade chose the natural path but not the same one as he had previously. He saw in that iconic figure, Robespierre, setting the Revolution on a course back to God, a return to an inevitable point of failure much like the one discovered on the path his four “heroes” of Silling Château found themselves, on that day the discovered praying Sophie and Adelaide (p. 160). Le Chevalier captures well the splitting of minds endemic to this period, a period caught on both a course away from God yet back to him. Le Chevalier takes issue with how Dolmance was attempting to purge in his inculcation of Eugénie all reference to *sensibilité*. Le Chevalier captures here the confusion inherent in a *sensibilité* expressed as either virtue or vice, caught up in the metaphysics of the natural world:

Barbaric one [Dolmance], are these not at all human beings like you? And if they are your kind, why should you enjoy yourself when they lie dying? Eugénie, Eugénie, never slay the sacred voice of Nature in your breast: it is to benevolence it will direct you despite yourself when you extricate from out of the fire of passions that absorb

it the clear tenor of Nature. Leave religion principles far behind you – very well, I approve it; but abandon not the virtues of sensibility inspires in us [...].<sup>593</sup>

Dolmance's rebuttal to Le Chevalier's deep-seated equivocation, which is necessarily Robespierre's but also Sade's own in his past musings, constitutes an abrupt metaphysical move that in one sweep preserves nature while acknowledging the pervasiveness of the new "phenomenology of spirit" that came as a result of the Revolution, a spirit that could in no way be discounted. Dolmance offers a way to become de-coupled from nature while still necessarily preserving it and all its "negativity", something impossible in the shift to the "positive", in that fetal "spirit", or consciousness of his time, that one Hegel would soon articulate. Dolmance admonishes Le Chevalier to recognize nature for what it is, not to be emotionally upended by the sight of crime:

Let your principles weed it out of you if you dread its sting; will it be possible to repent of an action with whose indifference you are profoundly penetrated.<sup>594</sup>

Dolmance then goes about closing the loop that follows back into the perpetuity of nature; and necessarily back to God. The first step is to sear the workings of the "heart", the gateway to metaphysical failure. He articulates it this way:

However, the heart deceives, because it is never anything but the expression of the mind's miscalculations; allow the latter to mature and the former will yield in good time; we are constantly led astray by false definitions when we wish to reason logically: I don't know what the heart is, not I: I only use the word to denote the mind's frailties. One single, one unique flame sheds its light in me: when I am whole and well, sound and sane, I am never misled by it; when I am old, hypochondriacal, or pusillanimous, it deceives me; in which case I tell myself I am sensible, but in truth I am merely weak and timid. Once again, Eugénie, I say it to you: be not abused by this perfidious sensibility; be well convinced of it, it is nothing but the mind's weakness; one weeps not save when one is afraid, and that is why kings are tyrants [...] Ah, Eugénie, believe me when I tell you that the delights born of apathy are worth much more than those you get of your sensibility; the latter can only touch the heart in our sense, the other titillates and overwhelms all of one's being.<sup>595</sup>

The apathy, of which Sade speaks, was a germane conceptualization of a process at work in object formation in the history of scientific inquiry, one that would go about both forming the "interiority" inchoate in Sade's time and withering the influence of the antecedent stages: "posteriority" and "anteriority" (not completely however). The juggernaut of this process was

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<sup>593</sup> Ibid, 341.

<sup>594</sup> Ibid, 342.

<sup>595</sup> Ibid, 342.

guided by scientists and philosophers, whose prioritization of “positive” objects in research into the natural world - and denigration of “negative” ones - set the tone for how reality would be confronted during the French Revolution and well into the nineteenth century. It was philosophes like d’Alembert and Condillac, whose scientific methods would lay down the experimental foundation for someone like Lavoisier to come along, whose discovery of oxidization marked an inaugural moment in the History of Science when a genuine discovery can be said to have been made. This claim will soon be explained but getting to the point where Lavoisier conducted his famous experiments with combustion is a necessary first step.

## 5.2 Pneumatology of Error

Dolmance’s presentation of the history of the object of scientific inquiry has an air of “delight” and “titillat[ion]” amiss in the elegiac one Hegel delivers in his “Preface: On Scientific Cognition” in *Phänomenologie*. Unlike this “single [...] flame” in mind when apathy impeaches the heart from its seat of privilege, Hegel sees only a Spirit dispirited, having “lost its essential life”, “conscious of [...] the finitude [of] its own content”, a content made up of only “empty husks”.<sup>596</sup> Hegel calls on philosophy to help Spirit roll back this awareness of being an “insubstantial reflection of itself into itself” and usher in that return to the primordial state before science was “modern” science.<sup>597</sup> In the following passage, Hegel unravels as if like an ancient scroll in reverse chronology those important episodes in the History of Science, itemizing each of them until arriving finally at the realm where this dissertation began its investigate, that one of pure “negativity”:

Philosophy is to meet this need [the recovery of the lost sense of solid and substantial being], not by opening up the fast-locked nature of substance [the experimental achievements of the likes of Lavoisier], and raising this to self-consciousness, not by bringing consciousness out of its chaos back to an order based on thought [Condillac’s epistemology], nor to the simplicity of the Notion [Newton’s rational mechanics], but rather by running together what thought has put asunder, by suppressing the differentiations of the Notion and restoring the *feeling* of essential being; in short, by producing edification rather than insight. The ‘beautiful’, the ‘holy’, the ‘eternal’, ‘religion’ and ‘love’ are the bait required to arouse the desire to bite; not the Notion, but ecstasy, not the cold march of necessity in the thing itself, but the ferment of enthusiasm [...].<sup>598</sup>

<sup>596</sup> G.W.F Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, op. cit., 4.

<sup>597</sup> Ibid.

<sup>598</sup> Ibid, 4-5.

Dolmance's apathy is compelling for two reasons. Firstly, on the more recent end of the historical pathway, taken by the "object" of scientific inquiry it offers heated ferocity to a empty and de-humanized form, one attributed only "cold" lifelessness in Hegel's account. Secondly, it was the subject of a lecture delivered to Eugénie, a young woman, whose gender was a contested term in scientific debates at the time. In "Metaphysics, Mathematics and the Gendering of Science in Eighteenth-Century France", Mary Terrall tells of the rise of the Académie des Sciences in the late eighteenth century as a consolidation of a particular way of practicing science. She distills its operating principle from Condorcet's formulation in his 1782 induction speech before the Académie:

The method of discovering truths has been reduced to an art, one could almost say to a set of formulae. Reason has finally recognized the route that it must follow and seized the thread that will prevent it from going astray.<sup>599</sup>

Analytic, and distinctly not metaphysical; professional, and purged of all signs of dilettantism, Terrall assigns to these two scientific approaches the rubrics: "algebra" and "animal magnetism". Both are distinguishable by what Jean-Sylvain Bailly calls "error", a notion, to which he even adds a pneumatological dimension:

[...] the sciences, which grow by the acquisition of truths, gain even more from the suppression of error; an error is always bad *leavening that ferments* and eventually *corrupts the mass* where it is introduced.<sup>600</sup>

The two rubrics bifurcate into gendered assumptions whereby science as "algebra" is distinctly masculine, the guiding spirit for what Terrall sees as a growing meritocracy of professional men, vying for greater *articulation* of skills, with the discipline itself being the determiner of merit and no longer lineage or favors bestowed by the king. "Animal magnetism" connotes popular science especially entwined in the legacy of mesmerism where one claim to scientific authority came from those *salonnières* of the salons. This science, popularized by Mesmer, was considered a feminine space:

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<sup>599</sup> Mary Terrall, 'Metaphysics, Mathematics and the Gendering of Science in Eighteen-Century France', *The Sciences in Enlightenment Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 246.

<sup>600</sup> Ibid, 261.

[...] the consolidation of the academy's position, with its attendant denial of the value of metaphysical principles, coincided both with the backlash against women's participation in the intellectual life of the Republic of Letters [...] The positive values assigned to calculation and precision measurement were subtly gendered as masculine, while metaphysics was castigated in feminine terms.<sup>601</sup>

However, Schiebinger proved early on that popular science offered its consumers just as much potential for the "positive" articulation of objects as engineers sitting before their tools of "precise measurements" and elaborate equations. Terrall fails to emphasize this possibility. The question of the difference between engineers and *salonnières* is a matter whose importance pertains to "interiority" and its different stages of formation. What is unique about Eugénie in *Philosophie dans le boudoir* is her hermaphroditic status, straddling the feminine, a metaphysician-in-training in the throes of passion, and the masculine, really on display as a surgeon-in-training, learning anatomy but, more importantly, the art of experimentation, her maiden surgery being her helping suture her own mother's vagina and anus shut with a needle and thread in order to conduct a parallel investigation into microbiology, an investigation coming on Madame de Saint-Ange's recommendation:

I believe it is now of the highest importance to provide against the escape of the poison [the syphilis] circulating in Madame's veins; consequently, Eugénie must very carefully sew her cunt and ass so that the virulent humor, more concentrated, less subject to evaporate and not at all the leakage, will more promptly cinder your bones.<sup>602</sup>

Sade is drawing out here his own take on the history of the "object" of scientific inquiry, a history informed by his own experiences and observations of the French Revolution, one coming as a much earlier vantage point compared with what would be Hegel's. And their respective conclusions could not have been any more different. The two rubrics Terrall introduces to explore issues of gender are useful starting points to intuit the increased convergence of "objects" of "interiority" central to the aim of this dissertation, a convergence really traceable to an evolution from popular to professional science. Coming on the sharpest point of this convergence is the possibility of witnessing discovery *sui generis* - not as a failed or even partially successful metaphysics, but one fully successful. Antoine Lavoisier

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<sup>601</sup> Ibid, 258.

<sup>602</sup> Marquis de Sade, *Philosophy in the Bedroom*, op. cit., 363.

was the Prometheus-figure, the significance of whose feat is really invisible without Sade's guidance. It would normally be a historical insult to compare the mild-mannered, virtuous and astute practitioner of chemistry to a libertine in the throes of sodomizing a fifteen-year old maiden but by now such a proposition should not seem far-fetched. Lavoisier is Dolmance, on the verge of learning the full potential of his metaphysics of apathy.

Franz Anton Mesmer's influence on the French Revolution was significant enough for Robert Darnton to see it as providing the pneumatological basis for future revolutionaries like Marat and Brissot to attack the corruption and despotism of the ancient regime. The basis for this line of argumentation has already had a rehearsal in earlier discussions on Priestley's epistemological egalitarianism and Bentham's utilitarianism, all of which happen to be grounded in experiences of the French Revolution, albeit from afar. The upshot of these discussions held that "optimism" replaced the extremism of what had otherwise been those "antipathies and sympathies" filling out the "plenum", "optimism" being a co-extensive fit so as not to fall into "the shallowness of an individual "positive" outlook (proximity) (p. 157) nor a "digitality" of d'Holbach's now familiar "congenial"/ "inimical" adage (p. 28). Darnton speaks of Marat's "popular sovereignty in scientific matters" as the basis for attacking the "despots" and aristocrats" in the Académie de Sciences,<sup>603</sup> a position Priestley and Bentham would have too found reasonable given their own attacks on elitism in their own homeland of England. The theoretical basis, underpinning Mesmerist practices attests to its deep "negative" immersion, one that can be easily taken for a "plenum", if the "objectness" of some of the descriptions of the component parts of its practice were shaved off and varnished with a "coat" of exclusively relational focus:

In February 1778, Franz Anton Mesmer arrived in Paris and proclaimed his discovery of a superfine fluid that penetrated and surrounded all bodies. Mesmer had not actually seen his fluid; he concluded that it must exist as the medium of gravity since planets could not attract one another in a vacuum. While bathing the entire universe

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<sup>603</sup> Robert Darnton, *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 164.

in this primeval “agent of nature” Mesmer brought it down to earth in order to supply Parisians with heat, light, electricity and magnetism [...].<sup>604</sup>

Handling objects in the “plenum” in this way is naturally fraught with the same problem of “coevality” seen earlier in how medically administered enemas as a palliative for illness in Renaissance medicine is destined for failure no matter how convincing the analogy may be in what say Agramont sees as the correspondence between constipation and the “putrefactions constricted in the bowels of the earth” causing earthquakes (p. 156). But it was these obvious shortcomings of Mesmerism that would initiate in the Académie a new line of pneumatological argumentation that, though derivative of its object of attack, would reverse the insult originally directed toward them by the likes of Brissot and Marat. It is at this point where Condorcet and Bailly return with their own pneumatology, a pneumatology of “error”. On a personal level, the battle lines here can be seen forming around that vendetta Marat had against Lavoisier for sardonically spreading the word amongst electors in the Académie that Marat claimed, in Arthur Donovan’s words, “his experiments with the microscope rendered the substance of fire visible”.<sup>605</sup> This claim merited the insult of quackery and led to his automatic barring from membership. On an institutional level, these battle lines also formed around Académie members like Lavoisier, Bailly and Guillotine, sitting in tubs of magnetized water, testing by experiment the claims made by proponents of Mesmerism and concluding in their final report to the king that if such claims to science be allowed to co-exist amongst those produced by “professionals”, the whole institution of science would be in peril.<sup>606</sup> The pneumatology of “error” brings metaphysics to the last stage of formation where authentic

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<sup>604</sup> Ibid, 3-4.

<sup>605</sup> Arthur Donovan, *Antoine Lavoisier: Science, Administration, and Revolution* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 226.

<sup>606</sup> Ibid, 215. \* ‘The government cannot remain indifferent to questions that affect the lives and health of its citizens. According to the system of Mesmer and his disciples, everyone can, simply through the control of magnetism, cure others. If this is so, the entire science of medicine becomes useless. Its schools should be closed, its systems of instructions changed, the institutions that serve as repositories of medical knowledge destroyed, and everyone should study magnetism. On an issue of such importance, the government ought to guard against too facile acceptance and absolute belief.’ (Full quotation)



discovery is finally possible. It is also the staging ground where “interiority” reaches its most dramatic focus and repertoire of effects.

To understand the principle behind a “pneumatology of error”, it is worth returning to the earlier mentioned “money problems” English kings confronted in their attempts to shore up value of their coinage while staving off unsanctioned utility that came when value was increasingly packed into and made transparent in the coins themselves (made intrinsic rather than extrinsic) (p. 203). The operations of the Birmingham counterfeiters and Boulton’s hubbing steam coin press were shown to both interrupt the value in extrinsic relations necessarily for the source of meaning to hold, the meaning of the king. Counterfeiters achieved this through point variables, i.e., changing Georgius III to George Gordon to promote utility and avoiding the accusation of counterfeiting by simply passing over the source where the coin should have otherwise derived its meaning. For the hubbing steam coin press, point variables had an accumulative effect whereby it was a machine that replaced the king as the source of emanation while saturating meaning in coin so consistently and equally recourse to extrinsicness was greatly reduced. In other words, it is only in objects’ differences that recourse to relations matter as Montaigne’s egg analogy has demonstrated. In “French Engineers Become Professionals; or, How Meritocracy Made Knowledge Objective”, Ken Alder could have seen a pneumatological potential in an engineer like Boulton but chooses to focus on French engineers of the Revolutionary period, who embody trends occurring in the science of dynamics. D’Alembert helped inaugurate dynamics, intensifying this science later in ballistic science of the French artillerymen in the Napoleonic Army. Alder offers this pneumatological account without calling it such:

Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer have memorably noted that “the solution to the problem of knowledge is the solution to the problem of social order” [...] the rules by which Enlightenment engineers sought to obtain successful results in material world were inextricably tied to the rules by which engineers were themselves judged.<sup>607</sup>

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<sup>607</sup> Ken Alder, ‘French Engineers Become Professionals; or, How Meritocracy Made Knowledge Objective’, *The Sciences in Enlightenment Europe*, op. cit., 94.

These engineers are formed in the manner Sade had Zamé entreat “législateurs” to aim their reforms at the “bille” rather than nature since natural laws are always “blindly” overreaching in whichever direction they aim, resulting only in “ l’œuf cassé le crime commis” (p. 204). And as Shapin and Schaffer observe, it is improvements in how “objects” are pursued that ultimately double back to reform the pursuer of these object, all in keeping with the metaphysics of distality supported in this essay and the progressive bottleneck through which “interiority” has been set to arrive, an “interiority” following the pattern of, for example, those point variables seen in those Birmingham coiners’ promotion of utility.

Point variables promoting utility in coinage can also be said to be bases of contestation in that famous debate of science that pitted Maupertuis’ “principle of least action” against “D’Alembert’s Principle”, a debate on whose outcome the “pneumatology of error” really crystallizes. Just as Zamé saw only blindness in how nature saw fit to throw billiard balls, D’Alembert also castigated those, who would cast their inquiring eye in this same direction towards metaphysics, calling the fruit of such an approach, in Terrall’s words, “confused perceptions, susceptible to error, as when a blind man interprets shapes by tapping with his stick.”<sup>608</sup> Maupertuis’s principle sought to strike a balance between what had become possible in the science of dynamic systems: the ability to quantify motion from point variables; and what was still obscure as a more global concern for the teleology of motion. He ended up treading in that familiar realm of extremes, where Bentham, for example, saw earlier cruelty in antipathies and sympathies. Terrall describes Maupertuis’ position this way:

Nature had been designed so that every change required a minimal expenditure of “action”, and God calculated that quantity continuously. In basing mechanics on an extremum principle, Maupertuis brought a mathematical version of final causation into physics, as all motion fulfill God’s purpose in minimizing action and maximizing efficiency.<sup>609</sup>

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<sup>608</sup> Mary Terrall, op. cit., 252.

<sup>609</sup> Ibid, 249-250.

D'Alembert had earlier called a "despicable science" such an interest in metaphysical "abstractions" like "time, space, matter and spirit" (p. i); and converted a theoretical rebuttal into an *ad hominum* attack on a modality of mind leading to such "erroneous" places, a modality feminized in qualities like passions and imagination. "D'Alembert's Principle" limited rather considerations to veritable point variables Terrall lists as "inertia, equilibrium and the composition of motion" which like coins made by the Birmingham counterfeiters could "sidestep[] the question of motion of what caused the change in motion at the instant of impact",<sup>610</sup> or better, the "extrinsic relations necessarily for the source of meaning to hold, the meaning of the king" (p. 203), in the case of the "first cause" in the natural world, the "King of kings". D'Alembert would have equally seen this problem distally as it pertains to the form of the "bille" that nature blindly throws: those non-professionals of popular science, a public as undifferentiated as the differential equations they cannot use, an inability that ultimately make them "dupes of unsanctioned knowledge", victim of charlatans' "errors".<sup>611</sup> Where Terrall describes pneumatology along gender lines, Alder sees it as the emergence of disciplinarity and the retreat of the "*corrupting* world of dilettantism"<sup>612</sup> in the salons. In contrast to metaphysics, the inutile product of armchair theoreticians, he argues that scientific praxis was increasingly seen as the fruit of analytic mathematics. Accordingly, for "D'Alembert's Principle", point variables would be utilized as the empirical basis for discovery. Alder compares these two pneumatological positions this way:

Time and again, engineers found that Newtonian mechanics did not lead directly to improved guns, waterwheels, boat hulls, or any of the other lumpy artefacts of material life. This is not to say mathematics was without value to engineers. On the contrary, the new analytic mathematics helped the engineers model those technologies whose behaviour could not be derived from first principles. For instance, the French engineers who created the science of machines [...] in the years 1765-1830 deployed mathematics as a form of "descriptionism," a way to quantify the relationship between certain measurable parameters and other measurable parameters. This was also the case for the new engineering science of ballistics.<sup>613</sup>

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<sup>610</sup> Ibid, 253.

<sup>611</sup> Ibid, 258-259.

<sup>612</sup> Ken Alder, op. cit., 110. (Emphasis added)

<sup>613</sup> Ibid, 113.

And, of course, these tools, shaping objects in the material world, emerged necessarily from the same pneumatological distance shaping engineers, much like how Bentham's panopticon in forming the material world reshaped metaphysically those within its purview. However, in a new level of intensification, the panopticon would step even further back and reshape the architects themselves, who become Zamé's "billes". Foucault, being a historian of transformations - and not causes (p. i) - could have only seen disciplinarity bringing about what he famously called "man and his doubles" but now with a metaphysical approach in place the arrival at this point in the History of Science is smoother and much more analogic. Alder made a point of elevating the importance of Jean-Baptiste Vaquette de Gribeauval's techniques beyond their practicality on the battlefield. He saw the meritocracy Gribeauval implemented amongst his engineers as a social system that "transcended politics"; and objectivity, error's pneumatological nemesis, could be said to be the basis of this success:

Meritocracy, then, made knowledge (appear) objective because it treated knowers according to the same logic with which they treated their object of study.<sup>614</sup>

Though shown to be rehearsed in the coterie of high society as Rousseau and Montesquieu prove in their respective studies of Grimm and Rica's observation, "interiority" really took to "the stage" first in the theatricity of the Revolution, featured in this dissertation in Sade's famous eulogy to the slain revolutionaries Marat and Le Pelletier. The metaphysics was given this "positive" interpretation: "Theatre actors have "positive" roles impelled to act according to "positive" features of what the particular theatre piece actually is: lines, props, a backdrop and all of this need not have a guillotine to enforce "inauthentic demands" (p. 138). Alder's presentation of the Gribeauvalists is a much more intensified version of this theatricity, such that *different roles are pushed so far to the front they leave the orbit of the performer and become indistinguishable from the objects being handled themselves, their correctness being a "positive" matter of mathematical verifiability*. Such transparencies marks the end of the

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<sup>614</sup> Ibid, 124.

metaphysical journey taken up in this dissertation and what remains now to do is take account of where this metaphysics ends up. If the “positivity” built to this point of refinement, calibrated to the extent where “errors” are even possible; a positivity cleaving off of the natural world as Hegel would have it, Sade comes to nature’s rescue with his character Dolmance, though the effort for nature is ultimately pyrrhic victory. Nature might have preferred the inherent inertness of the “positivity” standing in its midst to that “negative” thrust coming forward on the “sharp end” of the rapist’s cudgel, which is nature’s own creation and violator.

## Chapter 6

*Lavoisier***6.1 “Crystal Ammunition” and a New Way to Farm Saltpeter**

In Chapter One it was stated that though “Vila does well presenting *sensibilité*’s pathological tendencies when unhinged in individuals [she] presents it in a much more limited scope than Riskin, who sees the wider historical potential of *sensibilité* to produce social “pathos”, “pathos” defined here as “suffering”” (p. 49). It is clear by now what constitutes this “pathos”: the elusiveness of a metaphysics of success and a full description of what success would look like will now round out this essay. Another discussion introduced at the point of comparing Vila and Riskin was Starobinski’s “crystal and mirror” argument (p. 50) against Furet, who linked the violence of the revolution with Rousseau and the “atomization” of the sciences he supposedly represented. It was stated that Furet’s line of argumentation followed closely a Burkean “spirit of machine” insult. Starobinski used the “crystal” and “mirror” metaphors very well, pointing out that the first material is of “union”, a “negative space for relations”; the second, the “positive” powder forming reductive sciences, which could also very well produce that reflecting effect Foucault has evinced in his notion of the scientific “double”. It can be argued that the violence of the revolution took its cues from Rousseau and the “crystal ammunition”, fashioned out of his “negative” science. Darnton sees the hatred of future revolutionary leaders like Marat lit up by debates on science, in forms spoken in dying languages such as the nature of fire or the pneumatics of hot-air balloons; in forums of science where “popular sovereignty” reigned supreme as the discursive starting point.<sup>615</sup> The Gribauvalists - along with their reflecting “mirrors” of “positivity” (meritology) and their ammunition, the cannonballs built of their new science of ballistics - were really historically less important during the Revolutionary period as Starobinski reminds

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<sup>615</sup> Robert Darnton, op. cit., 164. \* ‘Their hatred of oppression carried them from philosophy to politics with the outbreak of the Revolution, and it is the sole spark of life remaining in their dead discourses on the nature of fire or the best way to guide balloons.’ (Full quotation)

those in posterity. Fire has been given a very different metaphysical work through in this dissertation, one, which follows from those different stages of failure primed up until this point. Firstly, fire descended to great “negative” depths in *Les 120 Journées*, reaching utter failure in the conflagrations in the dungeon at Silling Château. As a prisoner of the Bastille, Sade wrote this work bearing the full weight of the Ancien Regime under the *lettre de cachet*. Fire then began to be channeled along pathways of pneumatological incline towards greater “positivity” until it could reach the surface of all matter, hovering, making itself available for some experimental successes just as Priestley specified was possible in his notion of epistemological egalitarianism/ accidental discovery. Phlogistonism was really the scientific principle at this stage; and revolution, the political, and Marat’s defense of both captures well the pneumatological link, one that is implied in what has been called Starobinski’s “crystal ammunition”. As it turns out, fire happens also to be the beginning of the “metaphysics of success” and this was so in the laboratory where Lavoisier first conducted his successful experiments with oxidization. Just how these experiments can be called events of “authentic discovery” will occupy discussion in this chapter. Before this can be fully demonstrated, however, the pneumatological aspects of this event need to be outlined, traced along that familiar “negative-to-positive” incline, which accounts for the nature of objects pursued in the world and the objects doing the pursuing. All of this will help set the stage for presenting discovery as “metaphysically successful”. So what is this discovery then? To repeat, it is one, in which the natural world is penetrated both epistemologically and physically. The epistemological component needs to be built up first before moving on to the physical.

In discussing the debate concerning nomenclature in eighteenth-century French “chymie” in her chapter, “Languages of Science and the Revolution”, Riskin gave an illustrative account of how a science debate had concerns for relations beyond mere matter. Riskin followed through on her development of those polarities of “moral openness” and

“solipsism” of various Enlightenment scientists, placing their gradients of *sensibilité* at the center of social change. These two antipodes can be said to be an inspiration for the “negative” and “positive” framing, developed in this dissertation. The debate surrounding Lavoisier’s “oxidization” experiments and their effects on the long-held “phlogiston theory” was really an experiment within a greater one of political and social importance, an experiment with its own reactant entities, catalysts, “heated” reactions and product entities. Riskin accounts how, on one side there were the “culture-ists”, who sought a chemical naming system that conformed to calling things as was agreed upon by convention *ad initio*, a veering towards a negative epistemology. “Oil of vitriol” ought to have been called just that as everyone, knowing what their own senses tell them, would also know how such a substance would smell: vitriolic. This would be a line of reasoning similar to the one already seen taken up by Robespierre in his “common sense” defense of de Vissery de Bois-Valé (p. 27). On the other side, there were the “social-ists” (not to be mistaken for the politico-economic version of Marx), who sought a naming system that spurned metaphorical and conjectural formulations of the “culture-ists”, choosing a system that was interpretative, categorizing knowledge as if in an epistemological void so as to create a system unique both unto itself and the pertinent specialists (the scientific community) whose knowledge could accumulate with every new push into this void: “sulphuric acid” - not “oil of vitriol” - with growing recognition that acids form one sort of product of oxidization.<sup>616</sup> Riskin insightfully links this scientific debate on nomenclature directly to the one brewing in the political arena, a debate which would take a deadly turn during the “Reign of Terror” for those, who fell to the wrong side of these labels. Ultimately, the “culture-ist” faction “of the People”, who had Rousseau as their guiding influence, won the debate as the “social-ists” solipsistic approach was deemed too elitist, a label happening not to be too dissimilar from that of the fallen “aristocratic” one. The

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<sup>616</sup> Jessica Riskin, op. cit, 235.



“culture-ists” thus saw themselves as the bearers of the “social openness” (“negative”) label. Despite the initial loss, Lavoisier’s application of Condillac’s “positivist” method would in the long run fare quite well as the ultimate winners of the scientific argument. A victory for “social-ist” solipsism on the issue of chemical nomenclature is one half of the story of the epistemological component of concern; the other half pertains to Priestley and how his politics and chemistry coalesced around his position of epistemological egalitarianism. Priestley watched from afar the French Revolution unfold as one of its ardent supporters. He also happened to oppose Lavoisier’s position in the chemical debate surrounding oxidization. “Culture-ist” scientists like Priestley already have their own victories as in the case of Franklin’s triumph over Nollet as the captor and articulator of lightning. But Joseph Priestley was Lavoisier’s version of Franklin’s Nollet though from the inverse methodological position. Priestley has already been credited for having discovered “fixed air” (carbon dioxide), and elucidating what has been called in this dissertation, a “metaphysics of partial success”. However, he is better remembered for representing the final throes of that dying scientific theory: Phlogistonism. Before the showdown over this contested theory is presented, it is worth reflecting on the pneumatological dimension of Lavoisier’s work as a public scientist. As it turns out his work also emerged from cesspools, ones that were important in the production of gunpowder.

Albeit sarcastically, Burke captured well how discoveries amongst Rational Dissenters like Priestley boiled down to one of transposition between “fixed air” and “social reform”: ‘the spirit of liberty in action’ to ‘the wild gas, the fixed air’ (p. 150). The ferment, with which Lavoisier worked as an administrator and scientist, appointed by the crown to rationalize the gunpowder industry, raised a new relationship between science and society that also centered on a pneumatology of corruption. Donovan accounts how costs were kept artificially low for the refinement of one of the components of gunpowder: saltpeter, where

the economic counterbalance shifted against the refinement of table salt, making it more expensive, causing this household staple to have an inflated price for consumers. Donovan argues how the corruption of “economic irrationality” that favored “military force” could have easily been ignored at the expense of the citizens “if the system had in fact delivered adequate quantities of good gunpowder”.<sup>617</sup> Added to this was the privilege given to “gunpowder” farmers called “droit de fouille” who were itinerate government agents allowed to search family farms and homes without invitation, “scraping” saltpeter from “barns, dovecotes and privies” and charging all logistics of the task (lodging, tools, fuel and transport) to the owner, offering only pittance as remuneration.<sup>618</sup> If the ferment from Priestley’s fixed air was the epistemological egalitarianism and accidental discovery of his monism, these “cesspools” for Lavoisier were what was needed to be rationalized to maximize efficiency. And there was a societal component built into this need: removing collusion on salt refinement costs to undercut the authority of “gunpowder” farmers, which in turn favored the

[...] centralization of authority under a field marshal capable of directing the forces of science and technology to a common purpose.<sup>619</sup>

Donovan speaks of Lavoisier withstanding accusations of corruption made against him, in the form of conflicts of interest. It was thought that receiving prestigious science awards and opportunities of government funding while holding dual appointments at the Académie of Science and the royal Gunpowder Administration was highly suspect. The characteristic Donovan gives Lavoisier in the face of such accusations is a quality of sang-froid:

[...] he had little patience with those [envious] who saw what he considered service to the king and nation as self-interested grasping.<sup>620</sup>

This quality has been assigned earlier a metaphysical significance in Dolmance’s extolment of apathy - that burst of passion unbinding subjects from the centrifugality of nature and

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<sup>617</sup> Arthur Donovan, op. cit., 193.

<sup>618</sup> Ibid, 191-192.

<sup>619</sup> Ibid, 196.

<sup>620</sup> Ibid.

*sensibilité* (p. 234). Riskin called this quality “solipsism” in Lavoisier’s chemical nomenclature. This was also the manner Lavoisier stood against detractors like Priestley concerning his experiments with combustion and the controversy his conclusions caused.

The debate concerning the nature of fire between Priestley and Lavoisier takes a similar form as that one seen earlier between Diderot in his defence of Needham’s conception of the “animaculæ”; and La Mettrie, who praised Geoffroy for doing “more than speculat[ing] that plants were fertilised by the powder in their stamen” by actually discovering specific plant parts (p. 9). This marked a clear metaphysical departure point for those renunciators of “fact” like Diderot and those celebrators of the tradition of Voltaire, rounding out those two respective camps of moral and empirical science. Similar to Diderot, who intuited from Needham’s “animaculæ” an inclusive specimen for all organic life, Priestley saw fire imbued matter, organic and inorganic alike, the common denominator for everything. Phlogiston was that substance descended from “negative” sciences pre-dating even Montaigne though in this dissertation this Renaissance philosopher has been set as the earliest marker hereof. (Johann Joachim Becher obviously articulated the Phlogiston Theory first in 1667 but the idea goes as far back as the science of the Ancient Greeks.) McEvoy expresses the inclusiveness of how Priestley saw phlogiston penetrating all matter, using the false distinction between substance” and “quality”, where “qualities” easily flakes off the substance otherwise containing it and coming to be seen as a false separation:

The sense of substance which was acceptable to Priestley is that in which “air and water” etc. are regarded as “substances”. Thus, water for example, has an independent existence in the way in which none of its properties, such as wetness, does. Robbed of any Lockean underlying substratum, or “cause of their union” such as substance is merely a constantly conjoined combination of properties that are thus distinguished from their “variable adjuncts”: and it is in this sense that they are said to inhere in themselves. This sense of “substance” is sometimes expressed as “things” by Priestley; and this is the sense in which he defends the existence of phlogiston as a “substance” rather than a “property”.<sup>621</sup>

This illusionary “separateness” of “properties” and “substance” is of a similar digressional tendency in scientific research as “facts” are for say Geoffroy and his new plant parts,

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<sup>621</sup> John G. McEvoy, op. cit., 20.

accumulating off of what is otherwise the “substance” of the actual plant. And the inertness of these “facts” was given earlier that problem for materialism: the “scandal” where causation suffers “from an all too close relation with its effect” [...] the latter’s strength drawing in the entire unity (p. 20-21). Furthermore, there was a need for *dei ex machina* for these “positivities” to work, without any genuine “negative” force. Some mentioned earlier included divine maintenance (Boerhaave) and dramatization (Warman). Although approaching the natural world in a “positive” vein, Lavoisier is not stricken by the same impotence “positivity” brought to these other cases. As one example of impotence, in her conception of “wheeling movement”, Warman, citing Philippe Roger, connects the insurmountable captivity La Mettrie confronted in his scientific writing with that of the “promenades” Sade was refused as a prisoner at Vincennes:

Car à disocier le dispositif logique que Sade met en place, en utilisant La Mettrie, de la frustration associée dans l’espace carcéral à toute élaboration sur le mouvement, on connaîtrait la faute d’isoler l’écriture de ces condition d’accomplissement, pour avoir confondu celles-ci avec l’indésirable ‘vécu’ des biographies. *Activité dérégulée par nature, jeu insensé de déplacement et de substitution, le mouvement que Sade imprime à la société s’étend vite à l’histoire des hommes et des religions.*<sup>622</sup>

This captivity is of the same natural order as that one already mentioned as the “drag of cosmology”, i.e., those chains of “terror, spirits and fictions” Bentham sought to break with the “silken threads” in his pneumatology (p. 161). But Lavoisier had no need for any of this. With the metaphysical singularity of both his status and achievement as a scientist now to be considered - and with Sade’s concept of apathy built from a now fully developed metaphysics of “negativity” - it is now possible to introduce what has been claimed is a “metaphysics of success”

## 6.2 Metaphysics of Success

At the outset, it is worth recapitulating what has come so far as discovery’s different modalities and setting the stage for how it is that Lavoisier’s contribution to the history of discovery is unique:

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<sup>622</sup> Caroline Warman, op. cit., 14. (Emphasis added)

### Discovery as “Metaphysic of Failure”:

Discovery takes place within what has been called a “drag”, defined as the inability to become unhinged from nature. Recall in this regard Durcet’s frustrated words: “I know of nothing worse than your damnable regulations... one must reduce oneself to things... to things...” (p. 125). This “drag” complements in many ways the “uniformities of nature” Hume uses to undermine knowledge claims. However, it adds “negative” objects to the mix in order to widen scepticism’s shallowness in refusing to work with any object that is not “positive”. As has been shown, “negative” objects contain varying degrees of relational properties; and these were well captured in the “posteriority-anteriority-interiority” complex, developed in this dissertation. In this particular category of discovery, nature cannot be penetrated although knowledge is through and through, caught up in steep descent towards increasing “negativity”.

### Discovery as “Metaphysics of Partial Success”:

This form of discovery has had mixed results. On one hand, it is successful because it can penetrate nature. Using his method of epistemological egalitarianism/ accidental discovery, Priestley was able to make discoveries that “raised the skirt of nature” (so to speak), that is, extract from it safely guarded secrets, for example, soda water. With his Panopticon, Bentham was able to craft subjects’ minds in a significant and novel way towards deeper “interiority”. This significance of point was delivered recruiting Zamé, Sade’s answer to Bentham’s “legislateur”, who, as king of Tamoé, declared that reforms should be aimed only at modifying individuals (billiard balls) - and not nature (blind force). This would be done to avoid what he called breaking eggs, or crimes (p. 204) that inevitably come when aiming laws at nature. On the other hand, failure in this form comes as knowledge not accompanying these discoveries, i.e., knowledge is not penetrated. Priestley could not understand the oxidizing process he unleashed in his soda water experiments; and in Bentham’s panopticon,

understanding was still caught up in a “surrogate cosmos” and could not escape a new “uniformity” Hume raises as the guarantee for the impossibility of knowledge (p. 102).

Discovery as “Metaphysics of Success”:

Lavoisier’s discovery of oxidization will be considered for what it says about “authentic discovery”, or what has been established in this paper as a “metaphysics of success”. The two characteristics of such a discovery must meet the following requirements: a) nature must be penetrated (as was the case with the first part of the previous discovery); and b) knowledge must be penetrated as well so that understanding complements that, which has been discovered in nature.

The rarity of the convergence of these two elements that make up *authentic discovery* has been underestimated in major analyses on the subject. It is worth citing one significant example in the History of Science to justify this claim: the model of scientific success proposed by Hilary Putnam. One thinker has, however, formulated a conception of discovery that in many ways parallels the model of “authentic discovery”, being proposed in this paper - that one developed by Thomas Kuhn. What is needed, however, is to demonstrate how the model presented in this paper departs from that one given by Kuhn.

Hilary Putnam

In section “Reference and Understanding” of *Moral Science*, Putnam speaks of modern science as notably successful in how the knowledge it affords links up seamlessly with the natural world, describing the epistemological correspondence this way:

‘[w]hat ‘succeeds’ or ‘fails’ is not, in general, linguistic behaviour by itself but total behaviour. E.g., we say certain things, conduct certain reasonings with each other, manipulate materials in a certain way, and finally we have a bridge that enables us to cross a river that we couldn’t cross before. And our reasoning and discussion is as much a part of the total organized behaviour-complex as is our lifting of steel girders with a crane. So what I should really speak of is not the success or failure of our linguistic behaviour, but rather the contribution of our linguistic behaviour to the success of our total behaviour.’<sup>623</sup>

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<sup>623</sup> Hilary Putnam, ‘Reference and Understanding’, in *Meaning and the Moral Sciences* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1978), 100-101.

Salient in this claim is a lack of engagement with the kinds of priorities raised in this paper as significant to the history of discovery.

Firstly there is the respective triviality and non-triviality of the bridge and its materiality given in Putnam's above illustration. If a bridge is needed to cut travel time for a community scouring for food on the more bountiful side of a precipice then the discovery of a method to scale the span is caught up in what is now considered cosmological drag. How so? The limit of sunlight in a day requiring time-saving strategies and the more basic need for food to meet "anterior" biological needs downgrades the discovery of a bridge to a type incomplete, one, where knowledge is penetrated, i.e., an object long and strong enough for an individual to cross a span is found, but nature remains intact throughout the process, i.e., nothing about the discovery of this object and its application for human purposes alters the constitution of nature and its sovereignty over human actions. However, after some threshold of length and weight of a bridge a limit is reached where a material of unprecedented natural properties is required to achieve the same goal: enter Putnam's "steel girders". This would be the case regardless of whether or not some degree of "total organized behaviour-complex" is required to build a rope bridge across a gully or a multi-lane highway across San Francisco Bay. Putnam's conception fails to account for this nuance and misses the significance of what epistemological breakthrough was required for there to be some chemical composition in steel to allow for girders to achieve such a feat.

Secondly, there is the notion of different graduations of success and the acknowledgement that science has not always been "total organized behaviour-complex" seamlessly overlain the external world. Implicit is the belief that modern science emerged precipitously overtop earlier traditions like religion and magic, whose cognates: alchemy, astrology and pneumatology are simply nugatory precursors. This, in a nutshell, is the proposal of Edgar Zilsel, who claims modern science be the result of fortuitous

transformations in the nature of human economic behavior, namely stemming from the rise of capitalism. Logical positivists like Rudolph Carnap argue similarly that science is only “cognitively meaningful” the moment it can be supported by “statements about the world that are empirically verifiable or logically necessary” <sup>624</sup> - in other words, only statements attaining a certain acceptable degree of positivity can count as scientific and thus true.

Thomas Kuhn

Another sophisticated model of scientific discovery has been proposed by Thomas Kuhn in *Structures of Scientific Revolutions* (1962). In his chapter “Anomaly and the Emergence of Scientific Discovery” Kuhn comes to the same point of focus as the one now featured in the closing arguments of this dissertation: the showdown between Priestley and Lavoisier over the contentious subject of oxidization. Kuhn establishes his argumentation on similar theoretical grounds as those selected for this paper and at times even veers closely to what has been established as the metaphysical parameters of discovery. This is evident in his desire to present discovery as not only a phenomenon distinctly not digital:

[o]xygen was discovered,” misleads by suggesting that discovering something is a single simple act assimilable to our usual (and also questionable) concept of seeing. That is why we so readily assume that discovering, like seeing or touching, should be unequivocally attributable to an individual and to a moment in time;<sup>625</sup>

but also something of a dual process where discovery consists of both penetrations of nature and knowledge - or to use Kuhn’s own words, “recognizing both *that* something is and *what* it is”.<sup>626</sup> He juxtaposes the contributions of three significant scientists involved in the discovery of oxygen, that precipitating event of the Chemical Revolution. These contributors are C.W. Scheele, Joseph Priestley and Antoine Lavoisier. He poses the question about who, within this group, deserves credit for the discovery of oxygen. Kuhn discounts Scheele’s contribution on account his research was only published after the definitive announcement of

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<sup>624</sup> Entry for ‘Verificationism’ in Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, Wikipedia Foundation, Inc., last modified 14 September, 2014.

<sup>625</sup> Thomas S. Kuhn. *The Structures of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 55.

<sup>626</sup> Ibid.



the discovery of oxygen. He then focuses his search on the details of Priestley and Lavoisier's experimental conclusions to determine where credit lies. He argues that the assignment of credit to any one of the two is not as conclusive as many in posterity have claimed where it is unproblematic to assign Lavoisier the distinction of discoverer. Kuhn dispatches with this confidence by problematizing each one's findings, taking aim at a shared failure to recognize definitively "that something is" and "what it is" - to use the criteria of discovery just mentioned. If Priestley discovered oxygen in an impure form ("if holding impure oxygen in one's hand is to discover it, that had been done by everyone who ever bottled atmospheric air") and calls it something that it is not: "dephlogisticated air"; Lavoisier can be said to be no more successful when he claims oxygen to be "air itself entire" (understating the possibilities of other components) and calling it a "principle of acidity" combined with the pseudoscientific substance: "caloric, a matter of heat".<sup>627</sup> Both misidentifying "that [oxygen] is" and erroneously naming "what it is" amounts to dual failures in both aspects of the epistemological framework set up for discovery in this paper: penetration of nature and knowledge. The absence of an analytic definition of absolute discovery aside, Kuhn does acknowledge something of a quality *sui generis* in Lavoisier's intuition that something be removed from the atmosphere during combustion - and not added as phlogiston was thought to be, *mutatis mutandis*. However, Kuhn's theoretical model of discovery is not built to discriminate differences in discoveries, i.e., his examination of those seminal discoveries attributed to Newton, Lavoisier, Maxwell and Einstein end up being flat as they are all treated equally in his paradigm model of discovery. What will be put forward as the final stage of this essay is a conception of discovery that adds depth to the flatness, imbued Kuhn's negative structure of discovery. As is now well understood the ability to assign depth has depended on a pneumatological model of discovery that considers both the object of

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<sup>627</sup> Ibid, 54-55.

scientific inquiry and the objectness of the pursuer of this object, an interface aspectually monistic and historical, unfolding in this paper through the phases of that “posteriority-anteriority-interiority complex”. The focus now is “authentic discovery”, a modality of discovery imbued with metaphysical success and positioned at a particular epistemological juncture in the history of humankind. This juncture is formed from the intensification of the interiority presented in the previous chapter, one situated at the very limit where ontology shifts from revolutionary participants as role-player to tips of fingers (or instruments) of scientists (p.). As the contrast with the negativity of Hegelian dialectics has shown, this juncture preserves nature as a factor of consideration, something Hegel’s conception of *Geist* does not allow.

Lavoisier represents a unique development in the pneumatology of scientific inquiry. He is really a precursor to what was bracketed out earlier when “crystal ammunition” was the topic of discussion - crystal, that one half of the analogy presented by Starobinski. The other half was, of course, “mirrors”, pertaining to the latter half of the Revolution when “positive” sciences began to predominate, creating those reflections that Foucault would apperceive as the “doubling” effect of “man”. The ammunition at this stage was ballistic, comprising cannonballs, produced by the French engineering corps under the auspices of Jean Baptiste Vaquette de Gribeauval. Simply stated, Lavoisier primed what would be for the Gribeauvalists their all-important “pneumatology of error”, that one, describing that new manner of engaging objects in the external world; and the new quality of the object doing the engaging. This brings us to the conclusion of this study, one, undertaken with the goal to trace the “object” of scientific inquiry through the oeuvre of Sade.

The metaphysics of Lavoisier’s oxidation experiments have as their conditions of success the “pneumatology of error”. It is worth recapping some of its important features introduced already and consider how they pertain to Lavoisier. Firstly, Lavoisier’s

achievement follows the same pathway already seen trending “gribeauvalist” where professional science creates a “more intensified version of theatricity” pushing theatrical roles so far to the front that they leave the orbit of the performer and become indistinguishable from the objects themselves being handled, their correctness being “positive” matters of mathematical verifiability (p. 243-44). Another feature of Lavoisier’s achievement is how chemical nomenclature produced the scaffolding for his discovery. Riskin discussed how the terminology Lavoisier used to describe his experiments were first purged of all references to common usages, e.g., long held customs and accepted language of sensations of the natural world; and then replaced with “positive” terms, articulated with the necessary sharpness enabling further pushes into the “epistemological plenum”. In addition, Lavoisier has been shown building his discovery out of those familiar “cesspools”, the source of all pneumatological inquiry in this dissertation. Fire can be said to be phenomenally similar but he also studied, in Donovan’s words, the “vapors arising from the animal excreta”<sup>628</sup> to discover how to produce saltpeter more efficiently and abundantly for the good of the nation. He did this by aiming reforms at an industry where “economic irrationality” and parasitic practices by “gunpowder” farmers were sources of corruption. And, finally, Lavoisier does all of this with his characteristic “sang-froid”, much like Dolmance’s “apathy”. Both detach themselves from the centrifugality otherwise pulling them back into a descent into “negativity”: “closing the loop that follows back into the perpetuity of nature, and necessarily back to God” (p. 233). Lavoisier’s administrative style of professionalism and efficiency are visible in how he consolidated offices to streamline government processes; and how he remained icy to the popular revolutionary sentiment, engulfing his world. On both these accounts his *inegalitarianism* is really a pneumatological counterpart to Priestley’s “epistemological egalitarianism”. The elitism on all these features ultimately cost Lavoisier

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<sup>628</sup> Author Donovan, op. cit., 191.

his life at the guillotine. However, his sang-froid spirit would be bequeathed to subsequent scientific practices and attitudes in the later part of the Revolution and, as well, into the nineteenth century.

Ultimately, Lavoisier's experiments with oxidation comprise two metaphysical successes. The first one is the successful penetration of nature: capturing assorted calces of metal and the corresponding acids they form; the second is the successful penetration of knowledge: explaining the process by which changes in the before-and-after weight of a burnt metal, elicit some transfer of an unknown substance making the metal heavier after being burnt - and, in the experiment being controlled, the substance would have had to have been removed from air (oxygen). This debunked the premise of Phlogistonism because something was clearly added when this theory asserts that something needed to have been released in the form of that subtle substance, phlogiston. In *Lavoisier – The Crucial Year: The background and the Origin of His First Experiments on Combustion in 1772*, Guerlac described this discovery this way: “This *fait capital*, Lavoisier later called it – that the calx of metal is heavier than the regulus.”<sup>629</sup>

Just as Sade's “negativity” has been raised against Hegel's as a way of preserving nature in what otherwise was a drift into “positivity” in constructs like “consciousness” (Being-in-itself), Sade's “apathy” is acting as that same preventative measure for Lavoisier's metaphysics, which could easily be relegated to that realm of “positivity” his chemical nomenclature seems to resemble. But Risken proves this nomenclature was no simple arbitrary list of signs and symbols but one that could penetrate into the “epistemological

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<sup>629</sup> Henri Guerlac, *Lavoisier - The Crucial Year: The Background an Origin of His First Experiments on Combustion in 1772* (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1990), 111. ‘If [...] Lavoisier came to suspect, in the summer of 1772, that air is given off when metallic calxes are reduced, and consequently that it is absorbed when metal is burned or roasted, he had also become aware, at about the same time, of the significant fact that some metals, perhaps all metals that can be burned, gain weight when they are calcined. Here was a phenomenon which the phlogiston theory could not explain; for, according to this widely held theory, burning and calcination were accompanied by a loss of this hypothetical fire principle, whereas an increase in weight should have proven that something had been added. This *fait capital*, Lavoisier later called it – that the calx of metal is heavier than the regulus – we know to have been of crucial importance in the crystallization of his thought.’ (Full quotation)

void” of the world. This is an abrupt departure from the inertness that came with early discussions of materialism (La Mettrie and Warman). So what then is the difference if both are based on “positivity”? In a nutshell, these “signs and symbols” are the “mind’s calculations”<sup>630</sup> of Dolmance as he stands before the objects of his world. His “sodomizing penis” is the “distality” that stands before him as he can finally see to it that nature is properly penetrated with a force of “negativity”. It also comes with sterility as it is no longer bound by the drag of the world, which would have been the case if Eugenie’s vagina had been the target. Reproduction is proximity. And one wonders whether throughout this process nature enjoys the abuse. Presenting sodomy this way upgrades Foucault’s “new species” to one of metaphysical significance where “changing [...] discourses” and “modalities of power” are much greater than residences in homosexual bodies (p. 36). In closing this chapter, it worth quickly reflecting on Sade’s suspicion that nature just might. In a letter to his wife where he defends the proclivities of their “love life”, he reflects on two schools of thought on the issue of sodomy: the Jansenist:

[...] the Presidente [...] being a good Jansenist, she’s all against the *molinizing* of wives. She maintains that M. Cordier has never rammed anything but her *vessel of propagation* and that whoever steers any other course is doomed to sink in hell.

And the Jesuit:

[...] I who had a Jesuit upbringing, I who from Father Sanchez learned that one must avoid *plunging in over one’s depth*, and look hard lest one *leap into emptiness* because, according to Descartes, *Nature abhors a vacuum* [...].<sup>631</sup>

Nature comes across here as preferring coming to blows when the full impact of negativity can be felt - and not anything less that can slip past and miss its mark. Nature seems to resort to its “deathcrush”<sup>632</sup> to remedy these errant moments.

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<sup>630</sup> Marquis de Sade, ‘Philosophy in the Bedroom’, op. cit., 342. (Modified) \* ‘However, the heart [cannot] deceive[], because it is never anything but the expression of the mind’s []calculation’ (Full modified quotation),

<sup>631</sup> Marquis de Sade, ‘Letter III (1783)’, *Marquis de Sade: Justine, Philosophy in the Bedroom, & Other Writings*, op. cit., 132.

<sup>632</sup> This expression plays with the two phenomena Sade brings together: reproduction and vacuums and the ultimate effects both bring: death and absolute pressure.

## Chapter 7

## Conclusion

**7.1 Pneumatology in Rousseau, Hegel and Sade's Metaphysics**

Finding Sade's proper place in the History of Science has depended on reconceptualising that body of knowledge historically anathema to science: pneumatology. Pneumatology has been built in this dissertation as a countermeasure to tendencies that always seek to reduce knowledge and knowers to things with positive constitutions. These countermeasures have consisted of the following important epistemological formulations laid out in this dissertation: *passion* and the *plenum*.

*Passion:*

Knowledge is bundled in different ways with formations of knowers, who define and produce the objects of this knowledge, and this relationship has a dynamic history that has been shown to resemble more the negativity of distension than the positivity of linearity. The "posteriority-anteriority-interiority" complex was built to account for all objects' possible orientations towards other objects in the world from the most indirect (posteriority) to the most enclaved (interiority) - with directness (anteriority) being the baseline orientation for much of organic life that is visible. Passion was assigned the role of monistic unifier across the whole of this spectrum.

*Plenum:*

Knowledge has been investigated with a shift in emphasis from what is knowable about matter and its qualities - where positivities are always rife - to what is knowable about matter and its aspects where filiations between objects intimate something of a global knowledge, one set in this dissertation in the plenum. An example of the distinction between qualities and aspects of objects was given in the introduction in the comparison of La Mettrie and Diderot's very different responses to Needham's animalculae and continued on in

explorations of fire where presentation from Sade's conflagration in Silling Château in *Les 120 Journées*, Priestley's defense of Phlogistonism or Lavoisier's discovery of oxidization is taken principally as a general phenomenon - one not reducible to qualitative descriptions of separate domains of say what thermodynamics would mean to a physicist; or the Krebs Cycle, a biologist.<sup>633</sup>

Passion and the plenum are conceptually linked. The dissolution of all positivities, which is necessary for the plenum to be what it is, depends on passion acting as the *solvent* for the whole range of these objects. (This terminology was borrowed from Brian Fay and J. Donald Moon's usage (p. 33)). This dissertation has given to Sade's metaphysics a pneumatological foundation as it investigated ways his evolving oeuvre revealed modulations within the "negative" structures of this pneumatology, modulations that followed world-historical events surrounding the French Revolution. In this regard, Sade is placed within the metaphysical legacies of those two great purveyors on either side of the Revolution: Rousseau and Hegel. By way of a conclusion, it is worth confirming the significance of Sade in the intermediary position by demonstrating how it is that the pneumatological progression used to order the three work of focus in this dissertation is corroborated by Rousseau and Hegel in their own pneumatological ruminations. Similarities aside, Sade does differ from the two of them, the terms of the difference depending on understanding that other scale introduced in this dissertation, the "negative-to-positive" one.

It was stated at the most mature stage of the presentation of the "posteriority-anteriority-interiority" complex that the emergence of science on the most recent end did not

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<sup>633</sup> Evidence of this generality is salient in Sade's peculiar use of the word "conflagration" to describe the wickedest (most negative) form of violence even when fire as a physical phenomenon is conspicuously absent. Sade's narration of the execution of Constance in *Les 120 Journées* (p. 116) qualifies as such a case. Another is his depiction of Madame de Mistival's murder by her daughter, Eugénie, in *Philosophie dans le bourdoir* where Sade introduces the analogy of Nero's murder of his mother, Agrippina, into the scene. Sade speaks of 'Nero caress[ing] Agrippina upon the deck of the very bark with which she was to be engulfed' (p. 221) although it was a known historical fact that she died by drinking poison administered to her by Nero.

wipe away the orders of what had come before it and this is so no matter how adamantly some like Comte recommended positivism be chosen as the sole orientation for society: “Positivism is alone destined to prevail in the ordinary course of things. It alone has been making constant progress from many centuries” (p. 146). Even the very possibility of holding a position on such “positive” ground was recognized earlier by D’Alembert to be like standing in a space far too narrow to hold the full magnitude of what really occupies it; and far too incidental to remain there for very long (had what occupied it managed to fit the space in the first place): “The realm of erudition and of facts [of theologians or metaphysicians like the Aristotelians] is inexhaustible; the effortless acquisition made in it lead one to that one’s substance is continually growing, so to speak. On the contrary, the realm of *reason* and of discoveries is rather small” (p. 91) (Emphasis added). The code word for positivity in the Enlightenment has been shown to be reason. This dissertation argues that through passion (in all its now familiar modulations) Sade was able to decisively knock reason off its pedestal of epistemological authority (See Chapter 2). And it is through passion that Rousseau too swept reason aside and discovered his alternative metaphysics based in *l’amour*. The ability to work outside reason requires a theoretical construct to help avoid the kinds of inconsistencies in argumentation often attributed to forms when reason is absent. The “negative”-to-“positive” scale, proposed in this dissertation, provides the kind of order needed to navigate the interstices between “non-reason” to “reason”.

## **7.2 The Two Sisters; and Lifting up the Skirt of “Mother” Nature**

This dissertation ends where Sade is really set to begin filling out the limits of the argument he has developed up to this point in his oeuvre, “La Philosophie dans le boudoir”. The just mentioned mature work, *Juliette*, published in 1797, is really the keystone for the entirety of his oeuvre and making mention of it now is to hint that this dissertation is the mere seed of a much more comprehensive project to come. *Justine*, literally the “sister” novel to



*Juliette*, has purposely been passed over as well even though the work was published in 1791, with even earlier versions preceding it. The two “sister” novels really deserve to be spoken of under a unified conceptualization and this is a harbinger for how this future project will be structured. To sum up, it is worth telescoping into the future of Sade’s erudition a little in order to adumbrate just how the metaphysics presented in this dissertation links up with what Sade wrote about towards the twilight of his writing career. Sade published “Une Idée sur les romans” in 1800, as an introductory piece to his work, *Les Crimes de l’Amour*, and in this introductory piece he shares his vision of what constitutes great literature and what does not. He takes account of many of the notables of European literature, past and present. Wainhouse & Seaver, in the foreword to the essay in their 1966 compilation of Sade’s works call the piece a “trifle conventional”,<sup>634</sup> and perhaps by some standard it is so but they then go through a litany of examples of Sade contradicting principles he claims should not be broken in good literature, one being: “the novelist must not depart from what is probable”.<sup>635</sup> One wonders if they would complain about the probability of Sainville meeting such a tribe as the Butua or Tamoé. Is probable only that which satisfies verisimilitude? Cannot fantasy be used to reveal something that is claimed as real but only in metaphysical terms? This dissertation has made efforts to answer these kinds of questions on behalf of Sade, whose foray into “negativity” and all its cognates: passion, imagination and relations do not even have a proper language of expression. (Words always have that unfortunate habit of falling into the trap of “positivity”.) But Sade demands of writers to strive to discover just such an evanescent language:

If his imagination is held in check, let him yield to it, let him embellish what he sees: the fool culls a rose and plucks its petals; the man of genius smells its sweet perfume, and describes it. This is the man we shall read.<sup>636</sup>

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<sup>634</sup> Wainhouse and Seaver, ‘Foreword to ‘Reflections on the Novel’’, *Marquis de Sade: 120 Days of Sodom & Other Writings*, op. cit., 91.

<sup>635</sup> Ibid.

<sup>636</sup> Ibid, 111

This statement applies to scientists as well and Sade gives the most precise account of just what Lavoisier's combustion experiments were. The throes of pleasure of an incestuous relationship:

O you wish to venture upon this difficult and thorny career, bear in mind that *the novelist is the child of Nature, that she has created him to be her painter, if he does not become his mother's lover the moment she gives birth to him, let him never write, for we shall never read him.* But if he feels that burning need to portray everything, if, when fear and trembling, he probes into the bosom of Nature to seek his art therein and extracts models to follow, if he possesses the fever of talent and the enthusiasm of genius, let him follow the hand that leads him; once having divined man, he will paint him.<sup>637</sup>

The significance of this statement, said to be a "trifle conventional", takes the whole of Sade's very personal journey to be understood - from his prison cell in the Bastille, his meandering through the paroxysms of the Revolution and all the way up to the publication of "Une Idée" when he was on the verge of facing his second major incarceration, this time at Charenton - at the behest of Napoleon himself - where he would live out the rest of his days.

This dissertation has offered a first-of-its-kind full articulation of a hunch presented by many scholars, who have engaged with Sade over the years, that he was a significant intellectual of science in his age. I have demonstrated this point through close analysis of three of Sade's most important minor works: *Les 120 Journées de Sodome* (1785), *Aline et Valcour, ou le Roman philosophique* (completed in 1793 but not published until 1795) and *La Philosophie dans le boudoir* (1795). What remains now to do for a future project is test the claim made here by shifting the focus to Sade's two major works: *La Nouvelle Justine ou les Malheurs de la vertu* (1797) and *Juliette; ou les Prospérités du vice* (1797). The chronologies of both books have earlier geneses, alterations and revisions, spanning about the same time period as the three minor works, considered in my dissertation. (*Justine*, for example, started out as the short story, *Malheurs de la Vertu*, written in the Bastille in 1787, and had two other versions at different points of the Revolution.) This means that *Justine* and *Juliette* together may constitute an even more comprehensive statement concerning the shifting state of

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<sup>637</sup> Wainhouse and Seaver, trans., 'Reflections on the Novel', *Marquis de Sade: 120 Days of Sodom & Other Writings*, op. cit., 110-111. (Emphasis added)

“objects” of scientific inquiry than the ones given only piecemeal in the exploration of his minor works in this dissertation. If the conceptualisation, proposed in this dissertation, is sound, turning to *Justine* and *Juliette* could prove decisive evidence.

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